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The calvert review

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SINGING

*They gave me
pink and white and
I
love you
daisies on my
birthday.
Whose idea was that?
A-boom A-boom
white and
pink
and I love you
Bim bam
boom bom
say the giddy heads.*

—MARTHA MARCELLINO

The calvert review

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for

Summer Festival



\$50 to Roberta Shearer

for

Icon and Composition

in Primaries



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. . . Nineteen, twenty, twenty-one.

On the twenty-second floor of the Paramount Building on Broadway a man is washing windows. He is standing with his back to the street on the sill outside the second window from left front, which he has just finished washing. He sets the bucket of water inside and then drops his long-handled squeegee in after it. Then he reaches back with his right hand and unfastens one end of his safety strap. It drops from the window frame, striking the masonry with a sound that does not carry over the traffic noises. The end dangles free. With his left hand he holds the end of the strap still attached to the window frame. The window is open from his feet to the heavy part of his thighs. He begins to bend forward toward the room, shifting his foot. He straightens. He is poised on the sill, motionless, looking down at his foot. He is a small, drab, clothespin shape against a vertical, black oblong-shape on a grey expanse of buildingshape high above the marquee where "Mr. Hobbs Takes a Vacation starring James Stewart and Maureen O'Hara" is blinking in the eyes of July afternoon passersby.

There is chewing gum on the sill under his right foot.

While he was working at the window, a typist in the office heard her boss slam down the telephone receiver in the adjoining room and push back his chair. Quickly she threw the wad which she had built to considerable size, adding a quarter

SUMMER FESTIVAL

/ Verla Smith

stick at a time as the sweetness of the old gum slithered down her throat and was lost, toward the open triangular space between the window washer's legs. She bent over her typewriter. She would not stop pounding or look up while her boss was in the room in his slamming mood.

The window washer shapes a phrase using clenched teeth and closed lips in that order. His first job had consisted of finding seats for and cleaning up after patrons of a movie house which ran adventure serials on Saturday afternoon, and he loathed gum in any shape, size or condition including wrapped and under glass. Particularly he loathed gum on the sole of his right foot standing on a window sill outside the twenty-second floor of the Paramount Building. There was a story in the paper this morning about two washers—on Empire State, he thought it was—whose rig

broke. The guy with the paper had got off the I. R. T. at 86th Street and he did not see much more than the picture of the broken rig and the white arrow pointing toward the bodies. He cannot imagine himself falling through the air. Only guys who get careless fall around like that. He raises his foot slowly. The gum stretches out to a thin, glutinous string but does not let go. It is stuck to the instep of his shoe just back of the bend in the sole. He wriggles his foot inside the shoe. The laces feel loose. He scrapes the leather sole against the stone sill. The dry scuffling sound makes him shiver. He feels gooseflesh rising on his arms. In his left hand, small, painless needles begin to prod. The muscles are strained from his unrelenting grip upon the strap. The hand is going to sleep. Arthritis runs in his family. If he should fall photographers from the Times would rush over and take his picture squashed on the marquee reading "Mr. Hobbs Takes a Vacation starring James Stewart and Maureen O'Hara." A white arrow will point at his body. The Times will not print the picture.

The gum has spread on the sole. He cannot scrape it off on the stone. The hand is growing numb. He will have to raise the foot so far the gum cannot possibly stretch enough to follow. Kneehigh maybe. He will have to clean the shoe inside the room while the blonde typist gapes. He raises the foot inches and stops. A sheet of white paper on the desk inside the room catches his eye. He is standing on one foot and the corner of the paper is pointed toward him like the arrow in the picture. A drop of cold water falls on his forehead. He hears the air conditioner in the window overhead breathing deep labored circular breaths. The drop trickles down his forehead and disperses its wetness into his left eyebrow. Down on the street a whistle blows. Brakes screech. Trucks shift gears. Wheels halt. Voices rise. The whirring above his head grows louder. Another drop falls. He lowers the foot. Now he is working his foot inside the shoe, loosening the laces. Finally he can lift his heel out of the shoe. His big toe bends and straightens like the body of an angleworm as he works his foot backwards inch by inch until he is out of the shoe. He lets his left hand slide down on the safety strap inch by inch as once again he bends forward lowering his body toward the window. His shoeless right foot probes the edge of the sill. He cannot see it is directly above the pail of water.

From inside, a window washer with a sweaty face pries the shoe loose from the sill and takes it into the room. In its place he puts a wet grey sock, lowering the edge of the window upon its toe so it will not blow away. It is going to rain. He will be drenched on the way to the subway. His wife will be late meeting the train.

"I am having trouble with the range again," she will say.

"Again? That's the first I heard about trouble with the range. They aren't no moving parts in electric things. It's a current. A shot, like, coming in from the pole."

"All I know is I turn the front burner on and start the potatoes cooking and the first time I turn my back the heat stops and they don't cook and dinner's late."

"So use the back burner. So don't turn away when you're cooking."

"How would you like to spend your life standing over a stove watching a pot of potatoes not boil? We need a new range. First thing you know it'll get short circuit and burn the house down."

Sooner or later it had to come out. They are just getting to the kitchen floor and the kids are fighting over the television program. "A new range. Last week it was a leaking refrigerator flooding the basement and washing the house down to the East River, drowning everybody in sight. We can't get a new range. It's impossible. It's fantastic. I'm up to my neck in coupon books already."

"The refrigerator was six months ago and you don't have to raise your voice to me, Ed Wasserman."

"I'm not raising my voice."

"Not much you aren't." Then in a much lowered voice. "You're shouting. Think of the children."

"I'm not shouting," he shouts. And she will cry, leaving the room and he will eat his dinner in silence feeling like a dog and afterward watch the ball game on TV alone with no beer.

A big red semi-trailer transport was half way across Forty-third when the light changed to red and traffic was solid in front and behind and was backing up deeper and deeper both ways from the intersection. A pair of visitors standing in the middle of the sidewalk discussing what to do next joined the line at the box office of the Paramount to see "Mr. Hobbs Takes a Vacation," because on your first trip to New York City in seven years you can't go back to Elgin and tell that you spent the afternoon in a hotel room waiting for the musical comedy to start at eight-thirty even if you have walked all the way to Macy's and back and your feet are killing you and anyway James Stewart movies are always good family entertainment and maybe he can go to sleep in the dark provided he doesn't snore and attract attention. He is passing over a grating in the sidewalk and he puts his hand behind him and lets something fall. It is a folder for tourists with blue and green letters on the outside reading "New York is a summer festival." Warm air is coming up from the grating. It flutters the paper. The wife sees it and makes him pick it up.

A vendor on the opposite side of Broadway is drawing a good crowd with a wind-up plush bear whose forepaws seesaw, making a brightly painted tin wheel roll back and forth on a red string between them.

Late afternoon editions of the papers go on sale at the Times Square stand. Except the Times. If you want a Times you have to go somewhere else. In the inside pages, the Mirror is still talking about the rig falling from the Empire State Building.

On the twenty-second floor of the Paramount Building Ed Wasserman attaches a safety strap in the third window from left front, climbs out, and begins to wash the window.

ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF A VOLUNTEER TEACHER IN AFRICA

7 a.m. It stopped raining just long enough for the sun to come out and shine through the bedroom window and into my eyes, as it does each morning at this time. It would be useless to turn over, as I would then be facing the sun's reflection in the dresser mirror. Resolving for the hundredth time to rearrange the furniture, I wrenched free from the twisted sheets, lifted one end of the mosquito net — which as usual had pulled out during the night to admit a horde of thirsty malarial mosquitoes — and planted

From the diary of a former idealist sentenced to two years at hard peace on the Dark Continent

John M. Johnston

my feet in a puddle of water from the rain which had blown in through the open window.

I could hear Murphy making Niagara Falls in the bathroom, so I lit a cigarette and sat, yawning and scratching, watching the geckos slithering on the walls in search of a fat juicy moth for breakfast. Murphy is a beefy athletic type who teaches physical education at our school; I, on the other hand, am hopelessly emanci-

ated and teach English.

THE sun, having served its morning function as alarm clock, allowed itself to be shrouded once again by the voluminous black clouds which mark the rain season. A moment later the clouds let loose with a vengeance, as if to make up for lost time. The wind, not to be outdone, whipped through the mango tree surrounding the house, causing clusters of the hard fruit to beat pagan rhythm on the corrugated tin roof, much like the native drums in the nearby village which had kept me awake half the night.

What the hell. Only a half day of school today—come home and sleep a weekend.

After struggling into an unironed pair of khaki shorts and combing the gnarl out of my soldier-of-fortune beard, which had earned me the decorous nickname of "Scruffy," I went into the kitchen where Murphy was woofing down a man-sized bowl of imported shredded wheat and bananas.

"Want some?" he offered. I winced, and he shrugged. "Didja go see Petit last night?"

"We're not speaking," I replied. "She's not, anyway."

"How come?"

"One of our periodic spats. Over a matter so devastatingly profound in its implications that I've already forgotten just what it was."

"Tough."

"Well, to tell the truth, I was getting a bit tired of escorting a beautiful French ambassador's daughter to all those lavish diplomatic functions anyway."

Murphy pondered the credulity of this for a while, finally shook his head. "I think maybe Africa's gettin' to ya, Scruff."

The back door banged open and the houseboy breezed in to boil water for the filter. "Monin, sahs!"

"Mornin, Gbla. You go wash clothes today?"

"No get soap, sah."

"No soap? I done give you three bob yesterday for get soap."

"No petrol in you motorcycle, sah."

"Why you need motorcycle? Market only three blocks."

"Eh!!"—giving me his overworked look.

I dug into my pocket. "Okay—here three more bob. Take motorcycle for petrol, and get soap. Sabi?"

"Yessah! I go get am just now," he said, dashing for the door.

"Hey wait! Boil water first, *then* get petrol and soap."

His shoulders sagged. "Yessah."

8:15 A.M.: The embassy driver arrived a mere 25 minutes late to drive us to school, which is situated seven miles from our compound. The rain blew down in torrents as the jeep plowed through the winding stretches of rut and puddle; it swirled around and under our umbrellas as we dashed across the courtyard to the staff room; and then, as we reached shelter, it stopped abruptly, as if someone had turned off a faucet.

I waved a hasty greeting to the other staff members, grabbed a handful of books and hurried to first period, only to find the classroom empty. My first thought was that the normal rainy-season attendance had reached a new low, until I was informed that the student train from town had not yet arrived. After debating briefly whether to be annoyed or relieved, I sat down at the desk to prepare lessons for second period.

11:05 A.M.: The train wheezed in just as third period was drawing to a close. The students were herded together for morning devotion which, although normally allotted ten minutes, usually bites well into first period; today it all but devoured the fourth. We sang hymn no. 71—all eleven verses—and then listened to the headmaster deliver a glowing sermon on the virtues of patience and understanding, after which he called up 19 boys who had failed to bring their hymnbooks to school and administered a dozen strokes of the cane to each.

11:50 A.M.: Back in the classroom, I waited until the usual ritual of shouting, chasing and fighting had subsided to a dull roar, and opened the textbook.

"Okay, let's get started—we've only got a few minutes. Now after Macbeth has killed Duncan, he looks at his hands and sees blood. 'What hands are here?' he cries . . . Musa, wake Kaimba up. Then Lady Macbeth comes back and . . . yes, Dahniya?"

"Please sah, may I be excused?"

"No. Now Lady Macbeth—"

"Please sah, I'm pressed!"

"I said *no*. Now—"

"Oooohh . . ."

"Dahniya, that's enough! You can wait another few minutes. Now sit still."

Dahniya scrunched down in his seat, his face contorted in exaggerated pain.

"Now. Let's move on over to the banquet scene, where Macbeth is about to sit down at the table. Suddenly he sees . . . Musa, Kaimba's asleep again . . . Macbeth sees the ghost of Banquo sitting . . . what *is* it, Kamara?"

"Please sah, this boy has my pencil!"—pointing to the boy directly behind him.

"Akiwumi," I said wearily, "do you have Kamara's pencil?"

"Eh!! Nossah!"

"Yessah!" Kamara insisted. "He's using it, sah!"

"Akiwumi—"

"Please sah, he said I could use it. He gave it to me."

"Eh!! Nossah!"

"All right, Akiwumi. Go to the library and write 100 times: 'I will not steal Kamara's pencil in class.'"

"Eh!"

"Go, Akiwumi. Now."

"I beg, sah!"

"Go!"

There was dead silence as Akiwumi got up and reluctantly left the room. "Now," I sighed, "Macbeth points his finger at the ghost and . . . what is it *now* Kamara?"

"Yessah, please sah, he took my pencil with him, sah."

The bell rang just as I was collapsing into my chair. A brief elephant stampeded and the room was empty and silent.

It suddenly occurred to me that I had forgotten to tell the driver to come early today—meaning Murphy and I would have to catch a lorry back to town. As if in response, dark clouds quickly gathered in the sky.

Stepping out into the hall, I was met by the first bit of good news of the day in the person of Jolly Jollah, a second-year sixth former (about college freshman level) and part-time teacher at our school. Jolly is an exquisite example of young African maidenhood, and her provocative presence in the front row is the only thing that makes my last period class bearable. She greeted me with her endearing air of innocent surprise:

"Eh!"

"Well, Jolly—how de body?"—using a local salutation that always seemed particularly apt in Jolly's case.

"De body well, tenki," she replied sweetly. Like most of my students, who are taught in English, he prefers local dialect outside the classroom. "We no get class wit you today."

Careful to suppress any traces of eagerness, I said, "How bout we have seminar tonight for make up class?"

She cocked her head. "What is 'seminar'?"

"We go for ride na motorcycle."

Her eyes widened. "Eh!! Nossah!"

"No? Why not?"

"I no lek de motorcycle." She cringed delicately.

"Oh for—*why* you no lek am? Na plenty fun. We go na Cape Club for high-life, we go na Palm Club for drink, we go na beach for—"

"Not safe."

"Who? I mean what? Motorcycle? Me na *safe* driver."

"I see you last Saturday na marketplace. You run into—"

"That wasn't my fault. Some idiot taxi driver—"

She shook her head. "You drive *too muss* fast."

I thought furiously. "I been grade papers from test last Monday."

She brightened. "You grade my paper?"

"Mmm," I frowned. "Not so good."

Her face fell. "Eh."

"Maybe I look am again."

Brightened. "Yessah?"

"Maybe we go for ride tonight."

Fell. "Yessah."

Sweet thing. "I go fetch you na Wilberforce Corner 8 o'clock. You go come?"

"I go come."

I trotted down to the staff room to get Murphy, and together we dashed out and down the winding clay road—which the sudden torrent of rain instantly muddied—to the highway to await a lorry. We stood straining our eyes against the sheet of rain in search of a vehicle until our umbrellas were shredded and were on the verge of drowning in our clothes.

Eventually a hopelessly battered canvas-top truck, already bursting at the seams with passengers, slowed down long enough for us to swim aboard and assimilate ourselves into a veritable circus within: six hefty women, four of whom were nursing babies; a minister, replete in black frock, soiled collar and no shoes; a police officer, his stiff, white removable sleeves pinned somewhat randomly to the padded shoulders of his uniform, and one knee sock crumpled down around his ankle; an up-country trader, bundle in lap, green fez atop his otherwise bald head, and outfitted in an elaborate gown beneath which showed a well-worn pair of American dungarees; several laborers in undershirts, khaki shorts and plastic sandals; an uncountable number of children, two dogs, a goat, several wooden crates containing live chickens, sacks of rice, jugs of palm wine, clusters of mangoes, wrappings of dried bonga fish, bottles of red pepper sauce, bowls of peppers, beans, ground nuts, coconuts, sugar cane, potatoes, tomatoes, onions and a thousand other assorted items.

The rain whipped at the canopy overhead as we joggled and splashed along toward town. Inside, the Africans stared at Murphy and me in puzzled silence. After generations of white imperialism, the sight of two Americans riding in a cramped, dilapidated lorry is difficult to rationalize. And I suspect that, instead of admiring us

ICON

A BLARE of light and they flee in brittle flurry
But for the old fat one, who, disorganized
In dazed retreat, blunders across a cup, a fork,
And into the culdesac of an overturned glass.
Spellbound by glittering scuttle, I shrink
From the ranging antennae, the chill and sheeny torso.
The cankered ancient creeps out of his glass
And, skittering across the sink, turns
At the waist and looks at me, wrinkling
What should be his bright armour,
Until he is not evil in a glossy shell,
But only a sweaty animal, like a
Hot-blooded sow running with wagging teats.
His armour vanished, I crush him to the wall.
He's been there now for weeks encased in
A small green frame which complements his
Beige and amber smear. And all his kind
And other discontents have disappeared
Like ill vapors before this crucifix.

—*Roberta Shearer*

for it, they simply concluded that we were quite out of our minds.

When we reached town, Murphy caught a taxi home while I headed for the local department store to pick up some small token for Jolly. The rain swept down in heavy gusts, but I was already thoroughly drenched so I sloshed leisurely along the deeply guttered streets, ignoring the cries of innumerable taxi drivers: "Hey Jeem—you want taxi? Looka de taxi, Jeem!"

Approaching the department store, I fumbled in my pocket for sixpence for the fingerless, toeless beggar leaning in the doorway, who was even now reciting his lines at me—"Goodmoninboss! Anygoodfordepoor? Willyougimmedash? Ibegsahboss!"—which he repeats with such accustomed rapidity that it has become a sort of challenge to plunk a coin into his mutilated palm before he can finish. This takes practice, and today I lost, blaming it on my wet clothes.

Inside, I woke up the nearest saleslady and inquired about gift boxes of candy. "We no get," she replied.

"No get?"

She shook her head sleepily. "Is finished."

I was beginning to feel pretty much the same way, and decided to drown my frustrations in a king-size Oro at the snack bar. Oro is the local soft drink which, like American king-sizes, are watered-down small sizes—except that here there are no small sizes.

As I strolled into the snack bar, a husky voice burst out across the room: "Scruffy baby!"

Myrna Potter, an energetic up-country member of our little group and a king-size in her own right, waved from a booth. Be nice to her, I thought—she's got a jeep, and that means a ride home. I paid for my drink and took it over to her table.

"Scruffy doll—how's your body?" Myrna's English version of the local greeting never failed to unsettle me.

"Fine. How are things in bush country?"

"Normal. Marge has malaria, Wilbur's covered with boils, and Fred's pet cobra bit him on the elbow."

"You're looking fit."

"Yeah," she sighed. "I haven't had a sick day since we got here—people are beginning to talk. Doc says we're *expected* to get dysentery and schistosomiasis—the image, you know. Advised me to quit filtering my water for a while, and if that doesn't work to stop using a mosquito net."

"Good luck. Listen, you got your jeep here?"

"Not now—they're using it to make some deliveries. Won't have it back till five or so. Hey, you coming with Murphy and me tonight?"

"Where?"

"Beach Club. Gonna get *fried!*"—giving my knee a nudge.

"Well, I sorta got plans. . . ."

"Ahhh—your little French chicky, eh? Still can't resist your continental charm," she winked grotesquely, giving my beard a playful tug. "Well, bring her along—the more the messier."

"We'll see," I said, finishing my drink and getting up from the table. "Gotta pick up some chop and get home."

I bought a few groceries and went to the door, where I noticed that it wasn't raining. On an impulse, I thrust my foot out the open door. There was a clap of thunder, and I drew my foot back inside, dripping wet.

I tried to spot a taxi through the downpour, but there were none in sight. At times like this, I had to admit that things weren't really so different here from back in the states.

"Masta, you want buy banana?" inquired a tinkly voice at my side. A whispy street urchin in a torn one-piece shift held up a dozen or so pathetic bananas.

"Not now, street urchin. I go buy am next time."

"Yesterday you say you go buy am next time." Her largest imaginable eyes lowered slowly, tugging my resistance down with them. "I been wait for you."

The thought of presenting Jolly with a dozen bananas fleetingly crossed my mind. "Look angel, I no want de banana, but if you find me taxi, I go give you sixpence."

"Taxi? I go fetch am." I flipped her the coin and she vanished into the rain.

Moments later, a taxi roared around the corner, followed immediately by two more. From the other direction several more appeared, the drivers all waving for me to looka de taxi. Since the slightest hesitation would result in endless palaver among the drivers, I leaped into the nearest one, slamming the door behind me.

Finding a taxi is only half the battle—next one bickers over the fare. "How much to Brookfields?" I opened.

"Six bob," the driver grunted.

"Plenty other taxi," I replied, opening the door.

"Eh! ! How much you pay?"

"Three bob, like always."

"Maki four bob."

I started to get out. "Betcha dat green taxi go take me for three bob."

"Eh! ! Les go, les go."

I go back in and shut the door as the driver pulled his cap down over his eyes, floored the accelerator and shot off through town, weaving in and out between traffic and pedestrian following up the narrow path cleared by his bleating horn. Rather than risk air-sickness by watching the scenery blur by outside, I tried concentrating on the minutia which embellished the inside of the taxi—a cardboard Union Jack taped

over a broken side window, pictures of movie stars plastered all over the windshield, rubber and fur toys dangling from the rear-view window—until I began to wonder how he could see where we were going, and finally resorted to simply shutting my eyes.

When we reached the compound, I unfolded myself from the cab and paid the driver just as Gbla came running over to help with the groceries.

"I wan for use de motorcycle tonight," I told him. "You get plenty petrol?"

"Nossah. Motorcycle locked—you done take de key."

"Oh great. Well, did you get the laundry done?"

"Nossah. Still no get soap."

"Still no soap! Why not?"

"You say take motorcycle for get soap, and—"

"I know—motorcycle locked."

He grinned hugely. "Yessah."

I handed him the keys. "Okay, now go get *petrol*, get *soap*, and come back quick-quick."

He dashed off and I went inside where Murphy was doing push-ups on the floor.

"Your-ungh-turn-uhh-to cook-grrh-chop," he ungged.

I carried the groceries into the kitchen. "So you and Myrna are going to get boiled tonight. Better watch that girl."

He bounced up and began trotting boxer-style around the room. "Naah—she gets wild sometimes, but if she drinks enough she'll be harmless."

"Ah yes. 'Lechery, sir, it provokes, and unprovokes: it provokes the desire, but it takes away the performance'—Shakespeare: On Booze."

"You teach *that* to your kids?"

"We use the expurgated text."

Footsteps on the front porch. "Aftanooooon, Masta!"

Allie, our friendly neighborhood African trader—a chance to get a gift for Jolly. Followed by a lacky carrying an impossibly huge bundle of goods on his head, Allie bowed his way into the living room, accepted a cigaret and light and sat down on the floor, spreading his gown around him.

"I get plenty fine tings today," he assured us, motioning for the boy to unpack his wares. When everything had been arrayed on the floor, he reached over and picked up a stuffed baby crocodile. "How you lek dis one?"

"Nah." I picked up an ivory bracelet. "How much dis one?"

He pursed his lips and frowned. "I go give you for . . . one pound."

"No make joke—how much?"

"I say one pound."

I gave him my incredulous look. "You think me na *rich man*? I no get one pound!"

"How much you get?"

Thoughtful pause. "Five bob?"

"Tank you very much" He began indignantly packing his bags (certain tactics are fairly standard).

"Okay, okay. How much you want?"

"Take am for 15 bob."

"Six."

"Eh! ! I come down five bob, you only go up *one* bob!"

"Okay. Last price—ten bob."

Narrowed eyes. "Gimme 12 bob."

"Eleven."

"Take am," he groaned, handing over the bracelet as reluctantly as one can who has just made several hundred percent profit. I would ordinarily have held out for less, but it was getting late.

7:45 P.M.: Supper over, bathed and dressed, I set out on the motorcycle to pick up Jolly. When I reached Wilberforce Corner—a few discreet blocks from Jolly's house—she had not yet arrived, so I parked under a streetlight, lit a cigaret and relaxed.

The streetlights, spaced at half-block intervals and glowing yellow, did not obscure a clear sky full of stars. The pattern of stars over Africa looked exactly as it did over St. Louis, which always seemed a bit odd somehow.

It occurred to me after a few minutes that it wasn't raining. Often it would forget to rain for short periods if you just didn't think about it. Immediately, there was a distant rumble in the sky, but my thoughts were diverted in time by a honking horn as Murphy and Myrna waved by in her jeep on their way to the Beach Club. Myrna was practically in Murphy's lap as he drove—her prodigious size making it difficult *not* to be—and I felt a rush of pity for Murphy.

A half-hour or so later, it became obvious that Jolly wasn't coming. I wasn't terribly surprised, considering the fact that she hadn't showed up the last three times either.

I found a piece of paper, scribbled "YOU FLUNK" on it, and gave a neighborhood kid sixpense to deliver it to Jolly. Then I got back on the motorcycle and roared off to the Beach Club.

Myrna's jeep was parked outside the club, and inside the band was blasting away at a vaguely familiar ballad while everyone danced the high-life, a sort of zombie-shuffle popular in these parts. I found a small empty table in a corner and ordered three beers, with the intention of getting bombed as quickly as possible.

It wasn't hard to spot Myrna on the dance floor. Her version of the high-life, which might be described more accurately as a "wide-life," was beginning to take on

some of the more vigorous characteristics of the twist. From time to time, she and Murphy would return to their table for another couple of beers, and then she would drag him back onto the dance floor.

I drank steadily for several hours, getting bombed and bombed and refusing to let the waiter remove the empty bottles from the table. By now the club was a kaleidoscope of color, music and wild laughter as everyone endeavored to out-drink and out-dance everyone else. Murphy was beginning to show signs of wear, but Myrna was managing to work off the effects of the beer as fast as she consumed it. Judging from the increasing ferocity of her gyrations, she was whipping herself into a frenzy which would eventually demand release—one way or another.

But as the empty bottles piled up and the action began to blur, I lost interest in Murphy's fate and was contemplating whether or not to pass out, when I became aware of a brightly arrayed and rather attractive African girl sitting at my table. At first I thought that I had been miraculously transferred to someone else's table, and was rising to apologize when she spoke:

"I said, would you like to buy me a drink?"

This seemed easier than apologizing, so I handed her the remainder of my current bottle of beer.

"Thank you, my dear. You are a gentleman and a scholar."

She was dressed in traditional African garb—full length tight-fitting skirt of gay country-cloth, low-cut sleeveless bodice and matching bandanna around her hair. She was quite high, as any drunken fool could easily see, and her efforts at speaking in perfect English were matched only by mine at remaining conscious.

"My name is Juliette," she articulated. "My father is Minister of Trade. Unfortunately, he and I have come to a mutual parting of the ways over my insistence upon choosing my own friends. I made it clear to him that a girl in our modern society should be free to go out with *any* man, whether he be black, white, red, green or yellow."

I expressed wholehearted agreement by knocking a half-dozen empty bottles onto the floor.

"My father said I must cease my activities or be dismissed from his house," she went on, finishing the beer and signaling the waiter for another. "I told him that just because he was Minister of Education, this did not give him the right to decide who I should or should not see, and that after all my friends are only of the *highest* quality.

"Unfortunately, as I have said, we could not come to terms, and so I was forced to leave home and obtain a place of my own—not as nice, of course, as befits the daughter of the Minister of Transportation, but adequate, where I can entertain as I choose. Shall we go?"

I took a deep breath, clutching the sides of the table for support. "No," I insisted.

She sat staring at me for some time, her head cocked to one side—I wasn't sure whether she was going to pass out, or already had. Then she stood up unsteadily pronounced something unbecoming a Minister of Labor's daughter, and was gone.

I looked around to see if the waiter was bringing another beer, and found him standing next to the table with the check. The music had stopped and most everyone else had left, including Murphy and Myrna, so I paid the check and, after several futile attempts to stand up, allowed myself to be helped to my feet. I started for the door—which was trying cleverly to elude me—while the waiter began gathering empty bottles from the table, and as I finally caught up with the door there was a tremendous crash and the sound of breaking glass. I thought, "Butterfingers."

Outside I looked at my watch, but the hands wouldn't hold still long enough to see what time it was. Somehow I felt that the evening was still young.

Petite—what better time to run over and apologize, make up over a bottle of Le Richebourg '49 from her father's diplomatic stock.

Back on the motorcycle, I raced up the hill toward the French Ambassador's residence which, like most other diplomats' homes, was perched on the mountainside overlooking the city. I marveled at how little my driving skill had been affected by all the beer I had consumed, while other, more sober drivers tended to swerve and screech their tires as I passed them.

Nearing the house, I heard high-life music and came upon a long line of diplomatic cars parked along the road. I roared up between two of them, startling the chauffeurs out of a sound sleep. One of the cars had a huge "1" on the license plate; odd—I thought only the Prime Minister's car had that.

A band was playing on the patio and throngs of people in formal attire were drinking, dancing and talking. I found Petite with a tray of wine.

"Scroffy! What on airth you are doing here?"

I couldn't remember, so I quaffed a glass of wine to clear my head. "Hey, les hava party—s'enough people here for a *party*," I suggested, carefully slurring my words to demonstrate a fluidity of speech in spite of heavy drinking.

"We *are* having a party," she insisted as I sampled another glass from the tray, "and averyone eez here, *including*—"

"Hey, therezhure father," I interrupted, pointing. "Gotta go say hello."

I waltzed over to the ambassador and saluted briskly.

His eyebrows jumped. "Ahh—le jeune ambassadeur Americain. Your glass eez ampty, non?"

A quick second later it was, and he refilled it from a bottle of Riesling '53 and then stuck a cigar in my mouth. "You weel excuse me, mon ami—I muzz circulate," he apologized. "Anjoy youzelf."

While the ambassador circulated I tried to light the cigar, but now everything was beginning to circulate, and after lighting my nose twice and singeing my beard I was forced to seek help. Lolling up to the British ambassador, I troubled him for a bloody light: "I would like to smoke this bloody cigahh," I barked in my best Sir Winston, "but cawn't seem to get it bloody lit."

He obliged and strolled quickly away. I puffed up a cloud of smoke and then took a sip of wine, which promptly put out the cigar.

Grumbling, I looked around for the British ambassador and his bloody matches, but they were nowhere in sight. So I picked the ashes out of the drink as best I could and finished it, then headed back toward the table to refill the glass and get another light for my cigar. It took a while to find it, as things were beginning to run together in front of my eyes, and visions of Macbeth stalking around in Duncan's chamber clutching a bloody cigar buzzed in my mind.

The waiter at the table filled the glass, and as I thanked him the cigar fell out of my mouth into a deep bowl of thick red shrimp sauce.

With some groping I managed to extricate it, but I had serious doubts about ever getting it lit again. Then I looked at my dripping red hands.

"What hands are here! !" I cried. Several people turned to look. "Will all great Neptune's oceans wash this blood clean from my hands?"

I rushed up to the staring crowd, waving my hands in their faces. "No!" I bellowed. "This my hand will rather the multitudinous seas incarnadine, making the green one red!"

As the crowd drew back, I spotted a faucet by the side of the house. "Ah—a little water clears us of this deed," I chortled, rushing over and turning it on. Instantly the lawn sprinkler geysered up and proceeded to cleanse everyone on the lawn of their deeds.

Backing off from the spray, I collided with a white-robed figure waving his arms against the deluge.

"Avaunt! And quit my sight!" I howled, pointing my finger at him. "Let the earth hide thee! Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold!"

The quivering soul in white stared at me, wide-eyed with fright.

"Thou hast no speculation in those eyes which thou dost glare with! Hence, horrible shadow! Unreal mockery, hence! !"

He turned and fled, just as someone managed to turn off the sprinkler. Then Petite was leading me by the arm into the house.

"I fix you some coffee," she said, coaxing me into a chair, "and then you muzz go home and sleep eet off."

"Sleep! Glamis hath *murdered* sleep and therefore Cawdor shall sleep no more. Macbeth shall sleep no more!"

When I awoke, I was lying on a couch in the darkened living room. Out the window I could see traces of dawn but the party still seemed to be going strong.

I edged off the couch and groped my way to the kitchen where Petite was sitting drinking coffee.

"Ahh—Macbeth eez rise from zee dead," she smiled. "How you are feeling?"

"Great. Except for the broken glass in my head, I seem to be in one piece. You never believe this, but I came over here tonight to apologize. Now I really don't know where to start."

"How about weez some coffee?"

"If its all the same to you I think I'll just disappear quietly before I commit another faux pas. That's French, it means—"

"I know."

We walked to the front door. "What am I ever going to say to your father?"

She laughed. "He thought eet was very funny. These parties are usually quite dull. But you are all right now?"

"I will be. By the way, who was the fellow pretending to be Banquo's ghost?"

"What?"

"In the white robe—looked familiar somehow. Forget it. Do you really forgive me?"

"Come by tomorrow, eef you are able." She leaned up and kissed me.

I flowed over to my motorcycle, a veritable puddle of protoplasm, and winged my way home over the treetops.

When I arrived, I could hear raucous twist music blaring away inside. Murphy was passed out on the couch and Myrna was twisting up a storm by herself next to the portable record player. She turned suddenly as I was tiptoeing by and lunged at me—but I made it to my room, slamming and locking the door.

I peeled off my clothes, crawled under the mosquito net and collapsed on the bed with an exhausted sigh. The room vacillated in several directions for a while, then slowly came to a halt.

A gecko on the wall edged slowly toward a defenseless moth nearby. A lightning lunge, and the gecko settled back to digest its victim. I wondered if Myrna was still outside my door.

It began to rain outside, and I had visions of Banquo's ghost beating off the downpour with flailing arms. Then it suddenly occurred to me who the man in the white robe was—I had parked my motorcycle next to his limousine at the party.

I was wondering if it might not be a good idea to shave off the beard first thing in the morning, when I dropped mercifully, soundly to sleep.

A PAIR OF SNEAKERS

/ Don Wright

UP where the field was I could see the sky all the way down through the trees. I looked around at Elmer. He had on his overalls and boots and I had my sneakers. It was cold and I asked him when were we going to start. He had a pole and leaned on it and blinked and gripped the pole with his grey hands and said as soon as Joe got down somewhere and then something and I never could understand that nigger. Mom says it's because he has no teeth. But he does have teeth. Sometimes he had lots of teeth. And then way down in the woods somebody yelled and I said what was that.

Elmer said we'd better go and then some other people started yelling and hollering and smashing sticks and kicking leaves. Elmer yelled like when we used to have hogs. I spent the next half hour chasing after Elmer and swatting at the laurel branches and trying to make a sound like Elmer and the others did but it came out funny and Elmer laughed. So I just chased after him and hollered to myself. Elmer started to slow down and the others weren't making any noise. I asked Elmer what was happening and he said listen but I couldn't hear anything. And all of a sudden they started shooting up ahead and Elmer squashed me into the leaves. The shooting stopped and Elmer said I'd better find out what happened, so I ran through the woods and up to the field and climbed through the fence and ran with my sneakers down toward the pond. There was Dad and my uncle and some other men standing around a dead deer.

They were all talking that my Dad shot it with the second shot and there was a big hole where the bullet went in except Elmer said that's where the bullet

came out. They all bent over and looked at the place in the deer's neck where the hole was and they said that the deer never knew what hit him. I asked Dad if that would teach 'em and he said it would. Elmer and Joe rolled the deer over on its back and Joe cut two thick clumps of fur off the deer's hind legs and threw them in the grass and I stood there and looked. He let go the legs and they flopped out to the side. Then Joe bent over with his knife and said this buck wouldn't need these anymore and everyone laughed, especially Elmer. He blinks a lot when he laughs. Joe had to cut all the way back to its tail to get them off. Then he looked up and asked me what I thought about that and everybody was starting to laugh, so when I started grinning they really laughed.

Joe cut all the way up the deer's stomach and reached his hands up inside its chest. Then he pulled all its guts out and I saw that intestines are white and strung together and livers are purple and lungs are grey and blood thick and dark and the whole thing steamed like a kettle.

The pick up came and they lifted the deer on and we all climbed in and I sat on the spare tire. We hit a pot hole in the lane and the deer slid across the floor of the truck and jiggled.

Joe washed the deer out with a hose and they carried it by the legs into the granary. They slipped the rope around its neck and let the rope slide through the hook and when it drew tight they hauled it up and the pulley creaked up in the top of the granary. Joe propped open its belly with a stick and little pink drops dropped from the white hair of the deer's tail. Its legs hung down and the little pink drops dropped off of them too. I could see its backbone and some fat hanging inside and the white ribs with the stick holding them apart. It had black hair on its chest and there was the hole where the bullet came out.

I looked around and the men had gone and I could see the white barn through the slats in the corn crib and there was that deer with its tongue hanging out turning slowly on the rope.



TWO SKETCHES

/ Roy V. Eales

I. Ink & Daffodils

"Jute, my boy?"

"India, sir," the boy replied brushing his hair out of his eyes. He moved to sit again.

"Before you sit chappie, what's that muck on your hand, eh then, come on laddie out with it, what is it, brightly?" The teacher ran his palm over his brow and then down the back of his head. Abnormally thick, bushy-grey eyebrows and brown, thick-rimmed spectacles covered his eyes and the truth in them from his audience of ten-year olds. But he had a smile elsewhere on his face for the girls in the class. In fact, one was feeding the golden hamster while he waited for the boy's answer. And in the corner another watered a plant which was on its way up the pastel green painted wall and which, in another week or so, would pass the black two-inch-thick border separating the pastel green from flat cream.

"It's, er, ink, sir." The boy blushed as his eyes caught sight of the other children looking at his hands which he quickly tried to lose in the pockets of his short trousers. The teacher again ran his palm over his hair. The boy reddened deeper. His mind began to lose track of shape; plants, maps, sacks, brown spectacles and grey eyebrows swam around inside his head in a pool of ink. Suddenly he saw nothing but felt everything. He felt a tremendous blow on the side of his head, and could hear only a ring, and feel only a boiling ear.

"Hands out of your pockets when you speak, remember that chappie, but that's not all. Come out, come on. I'll teach you to spill the school's ink over the school's books and . . ." he ran his palm over his hair and down to his tweed coat collar, " . . . and over your hands. Come here." Mr. Friar walked back to the front of the class, the boy behind him now crying and wiping his wet cheeks which got bluer and bluer from the ink on his hands. He felt a rage but the au-

thority was too overwhelming for a hint of it to be shown. The class was silent as the boy arrived at the foot of the teacher's table in front of the blackboard. His grey socks hung down over a worn pair of brown shoes which were visible in places where the mud of the roads had not clung. The two girls finished their watering and feeding and returned to the oak desks in the front row. Only one desk was vacant now, at the back of the class in the row where the other boys sat. The boy's eyes caught an image of bright-yellow.

Mr. Friar fumbled around in the drawer he had opened. "Right here it is, chappie, the lesson teacher. Six of the best. Put out your hand, come on."

The boy slowly moved his hand towards the teacher who grabbed it moving it faster until the palm was out, shaking. He watched the thin yellow cane rise towards the ceiling then closed his eyes as the cane and its sting rapidly descended on his small ink-blotched palm. Three times the cane cracked on his right hand three times on his left. But the last three he didn't feel; the first had numbed his mind.

"Back to your seat chappie, go on," the teacher shouted as he threw the cane on top of his desk near the daffodils which had been brought to him only that morning from the girl in the front row. The eyes from the class followed the boy back to his seat. He sat bending forward, clenching his hands.

"Let's have no sniffing now lad, no sniffing. And you had better clean up that book or the matter will not be over." Mr. Friar ran his palm over his hair and down to his neck again. The bell rang in the hall outside. His class sat still. He then dismissed them for the day.

The boy walked out to the hall and down the stone stairs making sure to keep to the right. The monitors were posted on every landing to take the names of those who walked down two steps at a time, ran, or walked on the left side of the stairway. Any offenders would be seen by Mr. Friar, the head teacher of St. Stephen's school the next day.

"Never mind Davey I've had six of 'em from 'im before but it's not fair is it, but never mind Davey," the blond haired friend patted David on the back as they walked out of the building.

"I wish you hadn't thrown that ink over your shoulder though George, wasn't very nice was it. I copped it all right didn't I," Davey answered.

"Well thanks for not splitting on me anyway. He's not fair that Friar-tuck, not fair, oh well let's get home. Are you coming out tonight?" George asked.

"Might do," Davey said miserably.

The two boys parted at Davey's flat. Davey knocked on the door, said hello to his mother, and walked into his bedroom throwing his satchel on the bed and following it himself with a comic in his hand.

"Davey your tea's ready, wash your hands," his mother shouted looking into the bedroom not expecting to find him there.

"Oh there you are. Put the comic down your tea's ready. What's that on our hands?"

"Ink," he answered not looking up. His mother moved towards the bed.

"Come on Davey give me the comic and wash your hands. Why your hands are bruised, they're blue all right but that's not only ink. How did that happen, have you been fighting?"

"No Mr. Friar did it, he caned me for getting ink on my hands, that's what happened mum." He picked up the comic.

His mother examined his hands again, walked out of the room, put on her coat and in ten minutes was at the school, in Mr. Friar's office. Mr. Friar, while talking with her, palmed his hair down several times.

The next day Davey went to school as usual knowing nothing of his mother's visit. His hands were still coloured but the blue was turning to mauve. Mr. Friar walked in the classroom at the usual time, had his coat hung up by the little girl who watered the plant, and ordered the feeding of the hamster.

"Er, David, would you like to feed the hamster this morning my boy? Er Mary, show David how to feed the hamster would you dearie," Mr. Friar said palming down his hair to the back of his collar.

"There's a good chappie, there's a good chappy. Today we talk of the Congo and what we find there. Congo, anyone know where?"

II. Socks With Holes

She was probably just going off to the local church meeting or some similar organized love your neighbour society meeting. Anyway that evening it seemed the message from above had overtaken her. A little fellow about ten is walking in her direction as she leaves her house which is the same shape, size and colour as the one to the right and that to the left—except for the door which is respectable maroon. It's a grey house, two floors. One large window on the ground floor and two small ones above the large one on the second floor. These two windows are directly in line with their opposites across the street where Mike Dobby lives, and where the little fellow about ten is going. As the boy reaches Mike's house the woman calls him noticing his shabby coat which like his shirt and trousers are torn in places and were never made for him nor his brother who wore them when he was about ten.

"Georgie, I say Georgie, I have something for your dear." The boy lifts his head from the direction of the pavement the cracks and patterns of which he has

followed on his jog to Mike Dobby's house. He doesn't know the woman's name but she has always smiled at him in passing since he can remember.

"Oh, er 'allo." Georgie walks towards the woman. He thinks it may be a book, but he hopes it's chocolate. The woman stands smiling at him. She is tall in her early forties, looks well though, and healthy; dresses the part. A pearl brooch on her coat catches the sunlight which is in its dying stage.

"If you wait here a minute Georgie, I'll just pop inside and get what I have for you." She smiles and opens the door. Georgie waits and picks the peeling paint from one of the two pillars which stands uselessly staunch like the others in the street. Further down the street kids, looking like various coloured bundles of rags tin can between two coats placed in the road for goal-posts. Various doors open and close on each side of the street. A horse, its eyes hidden from the sunlight by two leather pads, plods wearily along the street dragging a cart loaded with coal bags and a black-faced coalman who wears a shiny leather coat. The black figure on the cart is propped against the back of his seat half asleep but holding the reins and intermittently shouting "Girrup boy, Girrup boy." Georgie turns and watches the horse and cart pass. The heavy-looking steel shoes on the horse's feet catch the sunlight and Georgie's eyes as they rise and fall crunching the small stones on the street.

"Here you are Georgie. I bought these for my husband but they're too small." The woman closes the door. Georgie turns from the horse to see a pair of blue socks hanging from the woman's hand.

"Oh er, thanks very much, yes, er thanks very much." Georgie takes the socks and puts his right shoe behind his left ankle to hide the hole in his sock of which he has suddenly become conscious. The woman smiles and goes off down the road. Georgie looks at the socks then quickly stuffs them in his pocket. At the same time he looks around him as if to make sure he's not being watched. He crosses the road to Mike Dobby's house and rings the bell twice; they live on the second floor. As he waits he takes the socks from his pocket and looks them over.

The door opens. "Hallo Georgie," says a fellow wearing a blue cap, about Georgie's age. "Hallo Mike, you coming out?" In a few minutes says Mike. "Here you know what that woman across the road just gave me?"

"No, what? What woman?"

"That tall woman that's always smiling, she lives over there." Georgie points.

"Oh her, well what she give you then?"

"Pair of socks." Georgie takes them from his pocket. "She called me across, said they were too big for her old man, gave 'em to me."

"She's always talking to my auntie, don't think I like her much George. I suppose she's all right then eh," says Mike unconcerned. Mike is very pale. His mother is dead; his father had remarried but lives elsewhere, thus, Mike lives with two aunts and an uncle. The three are single. All take care of their sick mother, Mike's grandmother, who occupies a wheel-chair in the front room.

"Here," says Mike looking behind him into the house, "they are all going away for tonight, taking me gran to the country. If you like you can come up tonight."

"That's good, here can I have a go at the piano then? How about having Dougie up too eh? He can play on the tins."

"Well we're not to make too much racket otherwise if me aunt finds out I'll get told off," Mike says, "You know what she's like."

"Well look I'll go home and have me tea Mike then I'll get Dougie and come up here. What time are they going?"

"'bout half an hour."

"Right, I'll see you later, bye Mike."

Mike says goodbye Georgie goes off down the road. He has forgotten about his blue socks in his pocket and the holes in the ones he wears.

As he walks he passes the house where the boys club leader lives; the retired insurance man's house; the BBC man's house; the policeman's house; the mother whose daughter went to America, her house; the Irish labourers' house; the postman's house; and, finally the old woman who has black curtains and dresses in black, and has done for years, her house. All the houses are joined. All the houses are built the same. All the people in the houses know the other people in the houses. The policeman has put a green fence around a piece of concrete in front of his house, but he has curtains with flowers. All the houses have linoleum with flowers. All the houses have tea-cups with flowers. All the houses have pictures on the wall—of flowers. But other than that kind of flower there's not much to be seen in the flower line. No, it's mostly bricks and mortar.

That night the three boys had fun. They played music. Georgie played the old black upright piano, Mike played on a piece of string tied to a tea-chest, and Dougie bashed on some tins. It was quite a noise to be heard in Cornwall Street. But there was no complaint then.

The following morning is Saturday and Georgie is again seen to be going in the direction of Mike's house. He arrives there this time without being stopped. He rings the bell. Mike appears.

"Hallo Georgie, I can't come out all the weekend."

"What do you mean Mike?" says Georgie surprised.

"They're going to keep me in for making a row last night . . .

"What, here Mike how'd they know that then?" Georgie interrupts.

"That old bugger across the road told 'em didn't she," says Mike, "She told them this morning."

"What, which old bugger, not her that gave me the socks."

"Yeah, and she reckons to my aunt that you were the trouble-maker George, that's what she said, I hear her myself when she came across this morning. So you'd better not let me uncle catch you."

ROTTERDAM: EMIGRATION PIER

STREAKS of shrieking birdflesh
Disrupt and slash the sky,
—Grotesque chalk-scrawls on a giant slate—
Airzag down as banshees
To skim the waves and pounce on flotsam,
Airstride froth-crested broomsticks.
Cables unfurl like umbilical cords,
Slither over the cobble-quilt,
A birth and separation
Of give-aways and the non-wanted,
Put up for world adoption.
Spidery cranes stretch arms of steel
Through rags of mist,
This country's mourning garb.
No jewels but aching vessels throb and vibrate,
Blotchy stains on dark glass
Soil this country's weeds and mine.

The threefold blast of the whistle's boom
Prowls bruising through the crowd,
Unleashes all the violence
Of the frenzied, churning screw.
Crystal cracks and shatters,
A broiling pool of foam dissolves
Into a clouded, turbid wake.
A ribbon-white scar is all that's left
Of fury, rage and turbulence:
A vein of imperfection in the marble sea.

The sudden jingle of the dinner xylophone
Tautens the limp marionettes,
The limbs resume to jerk and twitch,
The life-size puppetshow goes on.

Memories stir at the chime of the bell,
Thoughts fly away like a flutter of birds,
Winging back to where youth was
And hover round the spire.
The vesperclock tolls, the door is wide open,
Glow of stained glass suffusing the shadows,
Where still-burning candles cast shimmering glints
On words carved in stone and in my unconscious,
On the goblet dark with wine.
The images dim and I lift my own
Toward the day, spent and dying,
Leaning tiredly against the horizon.
Dents and dints gleam
In the blanketing dusk,
But nowhere do I find
A crack or a tear
In this exquisite cup.

—*Johanna Lucker*

TECUMSEH C

THE coffee steam was gaining substance out of the cup like night spirits out of a thick, black fog. They flicked their way upward, twisting and bending in an effortless dance to some ethereal symphony. Christ, thought Mac. He rolled on his back in the soft grass, no . . . the felt, the green felt. The glare above him was fluorescence, not sunlight. He turned away from the lamp to another light that shone down conically over five frogs that sat on stools at the bar. They're waiting for a fly to buzz by, no damn it, they're the ones that are buzzing, talking, telling stories and lapping at their beers with long, quick tongues. The telephone rang. The frogs guarded their glasses from the ringing with their hands. It even braanged it's way into Mac's symphony. It's all right though, . . . it's probably Susie . . .

*Susie, Susie
Slaughter, Slaughter.
Susie Slaughter,
The farmer's daughter . . .*

Martha. Now why the hell would Martha call this early? Mac squinted over the edge of the pool table and watched the bartender stand on his toes so Mac could see him. Mac tried to press further into the grass, but he hiccuped and John-saw that Mac saw him.

"Christ," he said, and dropped his head again, in the grass.

"'S your wife, Mac. You want to tell her you're not here?"

John had his huge, cracked hand over the transmitter. Mac rolled on his side to avoid throwing up. He waved his hand in the air between the coffee steam and the light. He nodded.

He don't seem to be around, Martha, I'll be sure to have him call if he comes in. . . . Yeah, I know. . . . right. . . . 'bye." He placed the phone back in its cradle with an affected softness. "You're supposed to get your ass home, Mac."

Mac didn't hear him; he was counting the numbered Easter eggs that were scattered around him on the table; his hand was still waving in the air, keeping perfect time to the slow, final movement as the symphony in the cup cooled.

/C. L. Wolford

It was about half an hour before Mac succeeded in getting up from the table. The room had ceased carouselling and he felt exactly like he did when he had gotten off the merry-go-round after three or four rides when he was a kid. He lumbered his over-sized frame to the bar, and as he swilled his last two drinks rapidly past his tongue, he watched over the rim of his glass, the frogs, guarding their beer as if he were going to steal it. He laughed at them as he trudged over the steel-cornered stairs up out of the dank, stifling cave.

He knew what they would be talking about. He knew all right. They would start off talking about someone else, like when he was there, but soon it would come around to him. It always did. If he was lucky, John would tell about Mac and the Indian. A lot of stories he didn't like him to tell, but the one about the Indian he didn't mind so much. He could hear John describe how plastered he got last Christmas Eve; 'drunker'na hoot owl,' he'd say. Mac laughed to himself. John always said, 'drunk'na hoot owl.' 'And then Mac left, laughing his head off. He told us he was gonna tie his scarf around that Indian's neck on top the Municipal Building. You know that Indian, Tedeum, or Tecumseh, or something like that. Anyway, some of us followed him up there, you were there Bill, you remember.' He was just about flying up the street; his coat was flapping all around him, and he was talking to himself, or more than likely, he was talking to the Indian. Anyway, we were all following behind him, must have been eight of us; it wasn't any too easy, either; we were hiding behind trees and poles and bushes and things and we still had to keep up with him. Only trouble was that as soon as we got there, the cops did too. Old Al Sprankle jumped out and tried to grab Mac. He kept running around the car calling old Al a murderer 'cause he didn't want Mac to keep the Indian from freezing. They finally got him to go, but not in the car. He wanted to walk the whole god damn way and old Al made Tom walk with him. I don't think Tom ever liked Al after that. I guess he had a hell of a time keeping Mac from waking up the whole town. Anyway, the next morning, Christmas morning, they let him out early so's he could get home before his kids got up, he ran straight up to the Municipal Building, broke in, climbed out on the dome, and

Collection

Portraits by young artists as students . . .

NUDE 23 1/2 x 4 1/2 / LAURA PEDOLSKY



NUDE 12 x 12.
/ DON WRIGHT



NUDE WITH GUITAR
16 x 30 1/2 / DON WRIGHT



IN SEASON'S DEPTH ABIDE 9 3/4 x 14 3/4
/ SUSAN NAYLOR



FIG ONE 6 x 12
/ DON WRIGHT



CONVERSATION
11 3/4 x 16 / ROBERT COLE



THE CHECKERED DRESS
12 x 17 1/2 / J. ROSS

wrapped his scarf around that Indian's neck. Mac never said a word. Nobody noticed it for about two weeks and then about the time everybody *did* know about it, it was gone. Nobody knows yet who took it down.'

Mac grinned, he still told people who asked him, that January was warmer than usual last year and the Indian got too warm, so he took it off himself and threw it away. Bet he wishes he had it now, as god damn cold as it is.

Mac came out of his daze for the first time since he left the club. He had been walking for at least five minutes and had just now become aware of the blanket of snow that had fallen since earlier that evening. Almost at once, he began sliding all over the sidewalk. "God damn," he said, and then stopped and looked around. The whole world seemed a large, black room, carpeted with a deep, white rug. He lost his balance, fell against a tree and slid down the table leg into the carpet. He felt so terribly small; the snow-covered limbs and twigs hovered over him like a huge white-veined hand. Tom and Jerry. Mac was Jerry, and Jerry was a mouse. He wiggled his nose and scratched his spine on the leg of the table. He laughed out loud and the echo in the room frightened him. The wind under the arclight in the corner was twisting, chasing its tail around and around. It's Tom! Mac stood up, very slowly, but not slowly enough. The wind had seen him. He shrieked and scampered up the street with Tom chasing after. Too frightened to look around, he watched the air freeze his breath and blow it past him. He watched it freeze and blow past, freeze and blow past, until his big legs grew tired and he tripped over a curb, slapping like a fly swatter into the snow.

After a few seconds, he looked up and saw the whirlwind chasing itself up the street. He wiped the blood from his face with the sleeve of his coat like a little boy. When he caught himself doing it, he laughed. He howled his way the remaining block to his house and sat down in front on the curb. When windows flew up and lights blinked on and people started yelling at him he laughed even louder. He fell back in the snow and listened to the sound of it echo and bounce around the neighborhood trees and houses and heads. He was there for hours, it seemed, listening to his own voice as it wound its way through the labyrinth.

The badge on the blue uniform reflected light from somewhere into his eyes. "No! I'M not going in the house, Sarge!" Old Tom really got mad when someone called him 'Sarge.' He had been made Chief when Albert Sprinkle died.

"Come on, Mac. Inside. You're wakin' all the neighbors."

"But I don't care, Tom. Don't you see? I just don't care."

"Why don'tcha throw him in jail, Tom, so decent folks can get some sleep?" cried a voice from a second story window.

"Go on back to bed, Jake," Tom said, with a wave of his arm.

"Yeah, go on back to bed, Jake, or at least close the window. I don't want that god damn horrendous nose of your's to freeze and fall off and hit somebody on the go . . ."

"Keep quiet, Mac," screamed Tom over the slamming of Jake's window.

"I don't care, Jesus Christ, if there's anything I can't stand, it's neighbors that yell out of windows with horrendous god damn noses. Did you ever take a good look at his nose, Tom? If that thing would have frozen and fallen off and hit somebody on th . . ."

"QUIET!!" Tom's face looked like a Walt Disney north wind, only with red cheeks. Mac started to laugh again. He could see Tom chasing his coat tails around and around underneath a streetlight somewhere, and he laughed until he was too weak to resist. Then Martha, who had been standing on the porch in high heels and a house coat, came down, and she and Tom got him into the house amid the shutting of windows and snuffing of lights.

Tom was beside himself. He huffed and puffed up and down on the living room rug, beginning each turn by pointing at Mac, who was grinning at him from the divan, and saying:

"One of these days, Mac, I *am* going to toss you in jail. Now what would people say, their lawyer in jail? Huh, what would they say?"

"How would you like me to send you a bill for ruining my god damn rug huh? How would you like that? You'd probably just chuck it over to the council and have the town pay for it."

Tom jerked on his overcoat and stormed toward the door.

"Aw, come on, Tom, I was only kidding, you know that, come on, Martha's making coffee. I'm sorry, honest to God I am, Tom wouldn't give the bill to the council." Mac was walking with his arm around Tom; he bent over and looked sideways up into his face. "Know what you'd do? You'd probably pay the whole bill by yourself. No kidding. You'd get extra jobs and everything and work yourself to a frazzle trying to pay it off. You'd even . . ." Tom was gone.

Martha was still in the kitchen, so Mac went back to the divan and flopped down. Martha's bridge club had been there that evening, he could tell that. There were clam dips and cheese dips and crackers and cokes strewn all over the room but Mac's favorite, the clam dip, was gone.

"God damn women, they knew right off that was my favorite. They probably asked Martha, before they got their coats off or anything, 'Oh, which one does Mac like?' and Martha would tell them and they'd all waddle over to try it and about two seconds later they'd say, 'Oh, it's all gone! There won't be any left for your husband, Martha,' and Martha, just to be polite, would tell them she had a little left for me, only she wouldn't. As if they didn't know. There *couldn't*

be any clam dip left. They only have so many clams to a town. Especially one about ten million miles from the ocean. Women really piss me off sometimes."

He looked at a print on the wall; it was a Winslow Homer that showed three farm boys holding hands and crossing a field on the way home from school or somewhere. Martha likes fields like that. She even likes those kind of fields better than Susie. That's probably why I married Martha. Because she likes fields better than Susie did. Martha walked into the room, between Mac and the picture.

"Here, let me wipe the blood off your face."

"You're a doll, Martha, you're a re . . Jesus Christ!, Martha! My *brain's* at the end of my nostrils!"

"Can't you at least be a little quiet, Mac? The kids are in bed."

"O.K., O.K., only stop sticking your fingers up my nose. Pretty soon they'll be so big I can hire myself out as a vacuum cleaner. I could make all kinds of money going around sniffing up dirt and crap from carpets and corners and places."

"Well, we could certainly make good use of the money." Martha stood up and turning, abruptly headed for the kitchen.

"Use the money? What do you mean, use the money? \$15,000 a year, and we could use the money, Jesus Christ, Martha." Martha didn't answer. "Why do you have to wear those heels all the time? I swear to God, Martha, you remind me of a chorus girl sometimes. Click Click Kick, Click Click Kick." Still no reply from the kitchen. "Do you want to know something, Martha? Do you really want to know something?"

"Oh, Mac, will you shut up? Will you just shut up?"

"You know, Martha, you're about as sensitive as a god damn roll of toilet paper, you know that?"

Mac made his way into the kitchen by moving along the walls. He found a chair in time to fall into it.

"You have beautiful legs, Martha."

"Sure."

"No kidding, you really do!" He sat looking at her legs as they stood in front of the sink while she collected the dishes. Then he stood up, and from behind, half embraced her and half held himself up.

"I'm sorry, Martha, Honest to . . ."

"That's all right, Mac. That's all right." She was crying.

He let her go and sat down again. "I'm going to stop drinking. Honest, Martha, hones . . ."

"Oh, Mac, don't." She stopped for a moment, but then continued stacking plates in the washer. Mac wished he could have found a different color dish washer. White was so cold.

"No kidding, Martha, I'll even, . . . Tell you what, you stop wearing heels around all the time and I'll stop drinking . . . on weekdays. How's that?"

Martha put another dish in the washer. She was still crying, but only enough to keep the water from welling in her eyes. "O.K., Mac."

"No, I mean it. Is it O.K.?"

"Yes, I said yes, Mac."

Mac stood up. "Come on, let's go to bed."

"As soon as I finish these." Mac watched her avoid his eyes.

"Come on, leave them 'til morning. It'll give you something to worry about while I'm making love to you." He laughed.

Martha looked at him, defensively. "Mac, you know I don't . . ."

"I know, Martha, I know, I was only kidding." He draped his arm around her shoulders and she smiled at him.

"Are you really going to try this time, Mac?"

He knew she said it only to justify to herself the sin of going to bed with a man she had hated only an hour ago, but he answered her anyway. "Honest. Honestly, I am."

"All right then, let's not talk about it any more."

"Martha, do you know anything about the weather, I mean, do you know, say what the weather is like from year to year?"

"You're crazy," she laughed, "honestly, Mac, sometimes I wonder about you."

He opened the door to the bedroom and let her in under his arm. "Seriously, Martha, do you remember? I mean, some people remember things like that, and I just thought maybe you were one that remembered, that's all."

She sat down on the bed and Mac sat beside her and kissed her.

"No, I don't remember things like that, why?"

"Well, I just thought . . ."

"Don't do that! You'll tear it. Here, let me take it off." She stood up and began to unbutton her dress. "Why don't you gargle or something? You really smell."

"Thanks a lot. Jesus Christ, thanks a lot."

As he flicked on the bathroom light, he felt better. It was his favorite room, at least for colors it was. The walls were white and the rest of it, except for the sink bowl and tub, were red. He stood on the red rug and began to brush his teeth. He glanced up at the mirror and saw the foam around his mouth. He took the brush out and started growling, "like a mad dog," he said.

"What?"

"Rabies! I have rabies, and I'm going nuts!" He looked at himself and started growling again.

"Oh . . ."

Mac turned on the hot water in the shower first, but after watching the steam rise for a few seconds, he reached carefully in and turned on the cold, and the steam stopped. He made a lot of noises in the shower to keep from freezing and to keep Martha awake. He was sobering fast.

*"You are my sunshine, my only sunshine.
You make me happy when skies are gray.
You'll never know dear, how much I love you,
Please don't keep my sunshine away."*

'Keep,' I always say 'keep' instead of 'take,' I don't know what's wrong with my mind, I wish I did. That's bad, 'please don't *keep* my sunsh . . .,' Jesus, I mean how bad can a guy . . ."

"Maaac . . ."

"O.K., O.K., I'm done anyway."

When he stepped back into the bedroom, she was lying in bed.

"God, you're beautiful, Martha."

"So are you, Mac."

"Cut it out, will you Martha? I'm serious." He threw the towel he had wrapped around him on the floor. He bounced on the bed like he expected it to be a trampoline.

"Why did you want to know about the weather?" She turned over and placed her chin gently on his chest.

"You look like a little girl. The way you're looking at me, you look like somebody's kid sister. At least, you would, if you weren't so beautiful."

"Come on, Mac," she wriggled close to his body, "Tell me why you wanted to know about the weather?"

Mac looked at the black nothing that was the ceiling and was glad it was there. "Oh, just wondering," he said vacantly. "I was wondering if it was warm, well . . . not warm actually, but if it was warmer than usual last January?"



I.

"POINT is," said Phipps, and he leaned over on his crate. "Point is, they got the devil up to the Slacker place!"

Phipps was the colored boy, and he was talking about Paulette Slacker. The rest of us sat listening in Sonny Banks' gas station, like we always did on Wednesday afternoons. There were about five of us, as I remember it. There was me and Sonny and then there was Phipps the colored boy, Junior Crackle the old man, and sometimes Gilbert Sloane who sold shoes in the Junction came out too.

"Yessir," said Phipps. "Yessiree, they got the devil up there for sure."

"The devil!" Sonny Banks said. He was over next to the stove, slouching back in his old rocker. He always sat like that.

He liked to lay back and let his stomach get up. It was a big one. When it was up he would hold it with two of the tiniest hands I ever saw. He'd hold it by the sides, like it was a big ball he was about to throw across the room.

"There ain't no devil," he said.

Phipps was on him in a second. This was his meat.

"No devil, huh Mr. Banks? I see he's done already tricked you! Don't you know that's his biggest trick? He's tryin' to get you thinking he ain't himself. Then he can move easy. He can move around you easy and snare your soul before you even get started to fighting him!"

Sonny Banks looked slowly around at us. There was no sign on his round red face. Then he went "Phoomph", shook his head, and started gnawing on a square piece of cheese.

Meanwhile Junior Crackle was having a good time. He sat in one corner facing us on a crate of oil cans. Junior Crackle was—we didn't know how old. He was the kind of old man you see who is starting to fade away. The way he smacked at that coffee, grinning all around—well he was a little shaky, that's all. He wore this kind of baseball cap, but it had two bills, one in front and one in back. We tried to get it off him sometimes, we told him it didn't look right for him to be wearing it, but he wouldn't listen. I knew he'd be getting into the argument soon.

THE DEVIL AND YEEHAW JUNCTION

/ Thomas P. Nugent

"O.K. Mr. Banks," Phipps said. His face was lighting up fast. "O.K. Mr. Banks, lemme ask you something. Have you ever felt evil coming in the night? Have you ever woke up and don't know what to do cause you're scared but you know really you *ain't* scared and you *want* that secret evil? An' then you know you could be evil, you could be as dirty as you want to; why you could roll and moan and slobber in the filth, just crawl in the evil doing what you want and not carin', loving the slime of secret, shameful sin?"

Junior Crackle looked like he was ready to jump up. His jaws were working away like mad.

"Tell more, I'm listening!" he shrieked. His voice sounded like a bird choking on sandpaper.

"I said I'm listening! Goddamnit it to hell, tell more!" The moans were coming a little faster now. He started to rock back and forth on the oil crate a little. Phipps got real quiet. He knew he was in control.

"Well Mr. Banks, that feeling, that creepy strange feeling—if that ain't no devil then I ain't Lucian Hogart Phipps!"

"I don't have no feeling like that," said Sonny Banks. "And what's more, I ain't *never* had the *slightest* feeling of anything like that." He chomped slowly away at his square piece of cheese. "Now I ain't sayin' you're wrong, necessarily. I mean to be fair about it. But I am saying, if you're right, this is a mighty funny goddamn place to live!"

We all settled back a little. All but Junior Crackle. He was half-way to his feet, and getting ready to shriek again.

"You haven't told it all!" he said. "Why won't you tell it all? You said they got the devil up to the Slacker place, and now you won't tell it!" It sounded like Junior had a throat full of broken glass and was grinding it up in there with his shrieks.

"I'm tellin' it. I'm tellin' it, ain't I? You got to wait a little, Junior. I can't tell about that Slacker place in one second, can I?" He wasn't really mad at Junior. Junior looked over at him with those shiny eyes, gulping away with happiness, glad to be near Phipps and the story. He settled back.

Phipps was warmed up by now. His head was rolling all around, and that big tongue of his looked like it was fighting to get out of his mouth and away for good.

"I say what I mean and I mean what I say. And I'm saying they got the devil up to the Slacker place! That's right, the devil. That fiery, soul-screeching, smoke-scorching devil himself. I know it, 'cause I saw him."

Junior started coming up again, chin working. Even Sonny Banks stopped flipping the cheese crumbs cross his stomach, and stared bug-eye at Phipps.

"Here I am," said Phipps, and his eyes were clicking around the room, clicking against us all. He was really rolling.

"Here I am jus' come out the show. I'm trying to head on home through the woods out back of the Slacker place. I ain't feelin' settled right cause that show done got me jumpy. It was one of them kind about a man done got lost in a psycho craze. He can't figure nothing right 'cep he knows he's all half psycho crazy. His room keeps shutting in on him. These blue sparks are jumping the gap from the psycho craze and then right out of his eyes. And a clock keeps screaming and bleedin' in front of him. He don't—"

"Don't get going on that movie," Sonny Banks said. He shifted a little in the chair. "They got no business making movies about crazy people. What if a crazy fellow saw one? You don't think that would shake him up a little? What'd he do if he saw sparks 'cause he was crazy, and then he saw *real* sparks in a movie? I'll tell you what! He wouldn't have no way of knowin' whether he was crazy at all!"

Sonny Banks rocked slowly. He didn't talk much, and now he was a little tired. But Phipps had hardly stopped to listen. He just swung back and forth on his crate, waiting for another crack at it.

"Well I'm half shaky, that ain't no lie. I'm half-shaky anyway, and then it gets to thunderin'. I'm wishing I'd had me money for a bus out to the flats, 'stead of having to take the woods. I'm shaky and the thunder keeps coming and a few big drops falling by the time I get up to the Slacker place. I come fifty feet up back of it. And then I got to stop because I done seen the horror and I'm so scared I can't make a move!"

Junior got up, all the way up. His mouth hung open, and loose.

"You seen a horror?" he said. Junior's eyes were full of glitter. He started turning the baseball cap with two bills around and around his head. He kept the glitter locked on Phipps, working on him hard.

"Mr. Crackle," Phipps almost whispered. "I seen two horrors."

Junior's head snapped back so hard the baseball cap fell off. He let it alone. He couldn't move now, so we knew he was O.K. for a while.

"Well, the first horror was the house. I looked up there and knew I was in bad shape. I figured I didn't have much chance of getting away at all. I 'member I kept trying to feel aroune for my soul, trying to tell if any power had ahold of it yet. I know they were going to go for it soon, but I didn't know when. So I . . ."

"What was wrong with the house?" Sonny Banks said. He had the look of a man whose patience was being tried. But he had another look under that look, and the second look wasn't so sure of itself.

"Well Mr. Banks, it had a light on it. No . . . that light wasn't *on* the house. It was all over it, around it, beneath it. Way up above it in the sky. And that light

was blue. That light was like blue smoke, driftin' hazy, fuzzy as smoke. It was driftin' in patches, snaking thru the trees. And there was a whining, moanin' sound. It sounded like spiders burning, and it sounded a little like that clock squealing through the psycho craze."

Nobody moved. Junior Crackle was frozen motionless. Sonny Banks just sat there, and he didn't know what to do either.

"Well, I wanted to do somethin', but I couldn't make a move. I was trying to figure a way to hide my soul, but I don't know how to get hold of it right. Then I look up, and I see Paulette Slacker. She's out in the yard and she ain't got nothing on but some silk nightgown and it's wide open and blowing all up around her in the wind. That fancy silk's flutterin' all up in her face, and the rest of her's wide open, shiny with the rain falling on it. I'm trying not to look at that, but I got to, and when I do after a while I see her right arm and how it's all shrivel-shrunk up. It looks burned out. And her hand is curled up like a scorched claw. She's raising the good arm up high toward the storm and she's moanin' and screaming. She's saying..."

"How'd she get that right arm all shrunk up?" Junior burst in suddenly. "How'd that arm get all shriveled up?" He looked around at us all, and his eyes were piercing.

"Junior," Phipps said, getting quiet again. "I got an idea on that. I got myself a little idea about that shrunk-up arm. Now Junior, let's try puttin' two and two together. On the one hand we got a shrunk-up arm, and on the other hand we got a devil. See what I'm getting at?"

Junior leaned far over, peering right up in Phipps' face.

"You mean a devil chewed up 'at arm someway? Why'd he go for the arm if he was tryin' to chew her up? Seems to me he shoulda' gone for something better!"

"Hold it, hold it," said Sonny Banks. He was getting restless in the rocker, shifting back and forth, and muttering every once in a while.

"You don't know you got any devil yet," he argued. "All you got is a blue light and some noise. That light coulda' been some lightning freak, that's all. And the humming noise, well, that mighta' been a generator or something." Sonny shook his head and settled back. He gave a long sigh and started hunting for another piece of cheese out of the box behind the stove.

"Mr. Banks, you ain't heard it all yet," Phipps answered. "You ain't heard what she was saying out in the yard yet."

"I know, and I'm admitting that. I'm just tryin' to make this logical, that's all. I'm just trying to stick by the facts as we see 'em."

Sonny squinted up hard at Phipps. He looked like a man who is trying to get at the true facts.

"Now how do you know what happened to Paulette Slacker's arm? She mighta' caught that arm in one of them New York subways, when she was going to school up there. Haven't you ever heard of that happening?"

Phipps was beginning to look sour.

"Subways don't burn up no arms like that," he muttered.

"Or she mighta' come down with some disease. Cancer might've set in on that arm. Point is, you just don't know. There's no way of knowing," he concluded.

"Well, I know what I heard her saying in the yard. The good arm was up, high as she could get it. Looked like it was reaching for somethin' up in the sky. And she's moaning:

"O darkest spirits, come on to me in the night,

"Come carryin' fire, sparkle-sizzle an' bright"

"Come in shadow-storm—"

"'ats devil talk!" Junior shouted. He was grinning again, and now he was pointing across to Sonny Banks.

"Ain't no way around 'at one, Sonny. 'ats devil talk for sure!" his voice cracked again. We knew he'd been on Phipps' side from the beginning.

"O.K., O.K." Sonny answered. "So it's devil talk. But that doesn't mean the devil *had* her, or anything. She might've read that out of some book.

Suddenly a voice said:

"Gentlemen, may I speak?"

We all turned and stared, astonished, at Mr. Gilbert Sloane, shoe salesman in Yeehaw Junction.

Now I haven't talked much about Gilbert Sloane. That's because he hardly ever said anything. He used to come out to the station and just sit listening. And he would never drink any of the coffee Sonny fixed. We couldn't figure it out for a while, but he must have liked it because he kept coming. Anyway, we had completely forgotten about him that day, and it was a real shocker when he spoke out all of a sudden.

"Gentlemen," he continued. "This may seem strange to you, as indeed it is. But I believe, I earnestly believe, that Mr. Phipps is right."

Heads turned on that one. You had to sit up and listen when Gilbert Sloane talked. He was sharp. That's the only way to describe it. He wore a coat and tie, his shoes were shined, and he owned a store. But that wasn't all. He was a hustler from the word go. He'd had a year of college. He knew about art. He spoke like an educated man, and the station was absolutely silent when he continued:

"I too have visited the Slacker estate. Not in the manner which you, Mr. Phipps, saw it, but rather on business. I called there recently in the hope of interesting Paulette Slacker in the purchase of some new shoes."

Gilbert Sloane paused a minute, and ran a hand through his blond, wavy hair. He was frowning deeply, trying to get at the true facts. There was a little smile on his lips.

"I was speaking with the maid in the hallway when I heard an amazing thing. Upstairs, right above me, a young lady was shouting in the strangest way. She was almost screaming, in fact."

We looked over at Phipps. His eyebrows were almost up to the top of his forehead. He was straining to get them higher, giving Sonny Banks the rolling eye of a man proved right in his story.

"The point," Gilbert Sloane said, looking around at everyone, "the point is, the words she was shouting were the same words Mr. Phipps heard!"

We all jumped a little. Phipps had his hands together by now. His head was thrown back and he was staring, wide-eyed, at the ceiling.

"What's more, I saw a strange blue light shimmering above the stairway." Gilbert spoke louder in the rising excitement. He had that thin little smile again, so you could tell he was just as confused as we were. "And the astounding thing, the truly astounding thing, was the fact that I too heard the whining noise!"

Junior Crackle was jumping. He was jumping hard, up and down, and half of the time he was coming down on his own two-billed baseball cap.

"I knew it!" he shrieked. "I knew it! They got a devil up there, lurking in them Slacker halls! An' he's just waiting to switch over. He done got Paulette Slacker's arm, and now he's waiting to switch over!"

"Switch over?" Sonny Banks asked.

"Yer goddamn right, switch over," Junior howled. "Waitin' to latch on to the next one, waiting to jump the gap between souls. He'll be on somebody else next, you wait."

"Hot diggity!" he screamed.

Phipps was moaning back in his chair. He sounded like he was saying some kind of prayer.

So the news was out. It looked like there was no way around it. Even Sonny Banks, if he'd wanted to, couldn't come up with an answer for that one. He just sat there, and I remember looking over at him right before we left the station. He was sitting up straight now, and shaking his big head back and forth.

"I don't know," he kept saying. "I just don't know."

II.

Clarence Onion owns the barbershop in Yeehaw Junction. I knew that the Slacker story was picking up speed, and I knew who was causing it. You know what happens to a story when everybody gets on it at once. All hell breaks loose. Well,

this thing was moving like wildfire, and a few days later I decided to see how bad it had gotten. I headed for Clarence Onion's barbershop.

Sonny Banks was in the chair. He lay back scowling, like he always does when he gets a haircut. He acts like it's an insult. Clarence was working on him, snipping away with a great big grin. I watched him.

"Heard about the killer rats?" he said.

Nobody spoke. The shoe-shine boy looked over at me with a smirk. He knew the score.

"What rats?" Sonny Banks said quietly.

"Killer rats. Giants. They've been tearing up the trees around the Slacker place."

I jumped a little. That story *was* on the move. Clarence Onion was looking around at us, and his throat had started. He worked it like a frog, quick throbs beneath his grinning chin.

Sonny Banks came up slowly, sighing.

"I ain't heard about any rats," he said.

"Well you going to hear about 'em now," said the shoe-shine boy. "Tell 'em what Averill said, Mr. Onion."

"That's what I'm doing now," Clarence said. "Why don't you sweep up a bit, Levaughn?"

Sonny Banks was looking around, puzzled.

"Where'd Averill hear about killer rats? I told him...."

"You don't have to *tell* anybody about these rats," Clarence said. "All you got to do is get out to the Slacker place and take a look at those trees."

"You been out there?" Sonny asked.

"I don't have to go out there, I already got the word from Averill. His cousin saw them last night."

"Well, what'd the cousin see?" Sonny asked irritably.

"I just told you what he saw. The trees were all chewed up. And Averill's cousin thinks he saw some of the rats themselves."

"*Thinks* he saw 'em? He don't know?" Sonny shook his head.

"He saw some funny shapes off in the woods." Clarence Onion's throat was going hard now. And the one eyebrow was twitching. He only has one eyebrow. It looks like a dash across that side of his forehead. He kind of points with it when he talks.

Sonny Banks was muttering. He looked disgusted with the whole thing.

"Chewed-up trees! Who says that's rats?" he asked.

"There's more," Levaughn interrupted. "Mr. Onion, tell him about the radios Averill's cousin brought his—"

"Keep sweeping, Levaughn," Clarence cut in. "Averill's cousin had his portable

XI.

TEACHERS who take child poets to their hearts
For worlds of bitter wisdom and hard arts
Of life should not expect the child to grow
To milder poetry, unbent, unknown
To morbid landscapes. If you teach that strife
Is quintessential to each breath of life;
If you must tell the child that you feel pain
From looking with gray eyes, it is in vain

To caution him from grief, or ask for laughter
For your own consolation. Ever after
Autumns of wisdom such as yours, a child
Could grow to hate the Spring, and hate the wild
Bitter fruit of February, Shun the cold,
The rays of March sun, turn vitreous, grow old.

—*L. S. Gordon*

radio with him. It's always worked perfect. It didn't work at all when he was near the Slacker place. And then when he got home, it *did* work. It's still working."

"So what?" said Sonny Banks.

"Well figure it out. It's magnetic. Something out there depolarized his charges on him, and the current cut out."

"So what?" said Sonny Banks.

The one eyebrow was curling back up on itself, and Clarence's throat was going like a broken balloon.

"Think. What force can depolarize a charge like that?"

"How should I know?" Sonny snapped. His face was getting very red.

"Well I can tell you. Cosmic ebulism. That's the story all right. Found it in the library. Cosmic ebulism reversed the magno-cycle. Science'll back that up all right. And guess who's got the cosmic ebulism? Only one fellow I know of. And that fellow is D. J. Devil himself."

Levaughn sighed back and forth.

"Um. Um. Um!" he said.

"Let me get this straight," Sonny said. It sounded like he was gurgling a little. "Let me get this straight. You think the devil stopped Averill's cousin's radio on him?"

"That's exactly what I think. Because there's one more thing. One more little detail which happens to fall in place."

"What?"

"Nobody's seen Paulette Slacker for more than a month. She hasn't been out of her—"

"Wait a minute!" Sonny interrupted. "I got you on that one. Somebody *has* seen her. Phipps said—"

"Aha! Now." Clarence cut in. Eyebrow, throat, and hands were all flying. "Now we come to it. I'm sorry Sonny, but I think I got *you* instead. You're right. You were going to say that Phipps saw her, weren't you? You're right, he did!" Now Clarence paused, rocking back and forth on his heels. He had a huge grin. Very softly he said: "Where, just where and how did Phipps see Paulette Slacker?"

Sonny stumbled bad.

"Well, she was—she was out in the yard."

"Uh-huh! That's what I thought. We all know that story, don't we? No need to go into *that* one again. That's the point, Sonny. The only time she goes out is at night, and the only place she goes is that yard, and the only thing she says is:

"O darkest spirits, come on to me in the night

"Come carrying fire, sparkle-sizzle and bright,

"Come in shadow-storm, jagged slash and out of sight."

Clarence Onion crouched way over while he chanted this. It came out scary, throbbing with sin. When he was done there was no sound in the barbershop.

"The devil's got her Sonny," he said softly. "Better face up to it, the devil's got her bad."

Well, it looked rough, I'll tell you that. The whole town was talking by now, and everybody was saying something had to be done. There were a lot of suggestions. Some people wanted to form a committee, get her out Yeehaw Junction. One fellow said we ought to burn the house down. But nobody had the guts to really try anything. They stayed away from the Slacker place, they talked, and they waited.

Then one morning there were signs up all along Mason Street:

"Revival! Religion is coming to Yeehaw Junction. The Reverend Edgar Snapp, world famous revivalist and man of God from Kansas City on tour! Hear Edgar Snapp make his renowned challenge to the devil!—That's right, he will challenge the devil himself, and battle him in a religious combat right in Yeehaw Junction! Don't miss it! Get your tickets now! Town Hall, August 13."

The news hit like a bombshell. You can imagine what the people of this town were thinking about. And when the time came, they packed that Town Hall tighter than I've ever seen it. I was kind of nervous about the whole thing, but I didn't want to miss this one. So I was right there, back in the 12th row, on that Friday night in August when the strangest thing that ever happened in Yeehaw Junction took place.

III.

Edgar Snapp looked sour. That's the only way to describe it. He looked like a crow with arthritis, stamping around up there on the platform. The show was about to begin. Every seat was taken, of course, and the Town Hall seemed ready to explode. It was hot. It was muggy. We could hear a little thunder, way off in the distance. It was a perfect night for the devil.

"Brothers and Sisters," he said. The wrinkles ran together along his face. The voice sounded harsher than crickets. He leaned far over the pulpit, almost into the first row. Edgar Snapp looked mean.

"Brothers and Sisters, I am a man of few words! I will not harangue you with fiery speeches. I will not rant and rave about the screaming agonies of Hell. No, my job is much simpler—and much more difficult. I am here to attack and destroy the devil. I am going to get him tonight."

His voice had become very soft. There were shadows around his eyes. They shifted smoothly while he talked.

"There is a devil in this town," he said. A murmur ran over the crowd. I looked around, spotted Sonny Banks and Gilbert Sloane. They were sitting quietly.

"There is a devil in this town, and we all know where he is. It did not take me long to discover the hidden evil in Yeehaw Junction. Oh, it was not the people who told me, who begged me to do something, that made me understand what was going on here. It was not Mr. Gilbert Sloane and the others who made me sense the secret horror of Yeehaw Junction. Brothers and Sisters, it was a feeling in the very air, a flickering spirit of sickness in the very streets. This town is in danger."

Edgar Snapp was getting louder. The heat seemed to be growing. I shifted a little, and suddenly saw Junior Crackle. He was rigid. His mouth hung open, watching, and his eyes were full of the old glitter.

"Yes, my friends, Yeehaw Junction is in danger. An evil force lurks in your homes, lies waiting beneath night shadows, stands ready to creep through your very beds! I will do all I can for you. I will gamble my immortal soul in combat with this fiend. I ask nothing in return. I want nothing from anyone. If you choose to drop a minimal donation of one dollar into the receptacles placed throughout the hall, that is your business. That money will be used only to allow me to continue my work. And now, I will ask the ushers to dim the lights in the hall."

The lights went down. The town hall got eerie. There were shadows moving along the windows and ceiling. I shifted a little.

"Let us get to the facts. I know you have all been afraid to speak of this. I am not afraid. I have learned, from Mr. Sloane and others, the Slacker story. You see, I am not afraid to say the name. Paulette Slacker. That is the name, and that is where the devil is!"

A little buzz came up from the crowd. Outside we could hear the thunder. I was still far away.

"We all know what has been happening out at the Slacker place. We all know about the noises, the blue lights, the scorched trees. We all know about the midnight screamings of Paulette Slacker."

Suddenly I wondered where Phipps was. My eyes were getting a little more use to the gloom by now, and I looked around. I couldn't find him. But I saw Gilbert Sloane again. He was watching Edgar Snapp carefully.

"We all know what Averill's cousin saw, and how his radio failed. Now let's do something about it! At this moment, in front of you all, I open the gates of my soul. I offer myself in sacrifice. If the devil is strong enough, if he dares, if he thinks he can capture forever the immortal spirit of Edgar Snapp, let him leave Paulette Slacker and come to me! I welcome him, I hope for the challenge. Let us have war, if we must!"

Edgar Snapp sank to one knee. He covered his face for a moment, then looked out at the crowd.

"Come, damn you!" he shouted.

I have never heard anything as quiet as the town hall at that moment. Only the tree-shadows moved with the wind, weaving slowly along the walls. Edgar Snapp remained kneeling, with his face covered.

Something moved. It moved slowly, right near me, rising. I turned and saw Junior Crackle standing four seats down. He was standing straight up, and he was looking toward the back of the hall.

"God Almighty," Junior Crackle whispered.

I followed his glance. I began to rise myself, we all did. A figure dressed in black, a dim figure that swayed slightly as it walked, a figure with the whitest face I've ever seen was moving slowly up the aisle. It was a woman.

It was Paulette Slacker.

The Town Hall froze. Somewhere there was final thunder. The crickets sounded murderous. Edgar Snapp stood up slowly. Then he hopped backwards twice. He almost fell off the platform. His hands were out in front of him. He kept waving them back and forth, like he wanted her to go away.

Paulette Slacker kept walking. She walked right through the hall and up on the platform with Edgar Snapp. She turned and faced the crowd.

"I believe you sent for the devil?" she said.

THE snow isn't new anymore,
But already chain-ground as
Tentative cars flounder through
The piled streets, black-burnt
Eyes behind whited windshields.
You'd think they could be pure
In all that white,
Frigid and separate
As their icebound cars.
But it isn't enough.
Frost up to the eyeballs,
Yet see within
Bright seething red
Wriggling, all that
Glister-white behind
Shut eyes is only
Secret blood.

COMPOSITION IN PRIMARIES

By darkfall,
The snow is steaming
With yellow holes
And cigarette butts.
Roaring through the black
I see the jerking moon
Turn sullen red, pulsing
Blood in on itself like
Oil in a gutter.
The world over
And time no more,
I stop my car
Against a tree, waiting.
I know the rest—
The seven angels and
The horsemen of the apocalypse
The blood running in the streets
Up to a horse's bridle.
(How much higher than a parking meter?)
But the glare pales,
And all my vigil was only
Afterimage of a
Traffic signal
Hung on the moon.
And anyway, Revelation
Is outclassed by Hollywood,
Gog and Magog no more than
Sulky lap monsters.
We know the moon is dust,
So turned to blood it
Could only be red clay
Which isn't nearly so effective.

Slipping under the dark water,
I burn the moon out of my
Eyes with a rose cigarette.
I flick ashes off my belly,
Extend a toe to stroke the faucet,
Beguiling and caressing
Until it gives forth
A pent gush.

The world may end and we'll never know it, but just go on
taking coffee breaks and luring executives
who have to act masculine, but really, sex is just too messy,
and couldn't there be some deodorizer
for these our intimate moments? Men at least
smell like chlorine, but we are much more teeming.
And afterward who moves first,
and like as not they'll start discussing relativity.

But the world *is*
Over and everybody
Dead in the
Cratered snow.
For God has grown
Subtle, and
This morning,
Head broken into
A wide white
Grin, a great
Black dog hulked
On the road bruising
Rubber heels
As rush hour reeled over him.

—*Roberta Shearer*

アメリカの友へ

A Letter To American Friends

IT is almost five years ago that I came to this country with an ambition to absorb fresh nutrition and stimuli. Since that time, with your understanding and help, I have had opportunities to experience different manners and customs, associate with people of a great variety, and exchange ideas and opinions with them. I have been given a wonderful environment to think of my country and world problems from various angles.

The effect of this experience has been tremendous. Among other things, the experience has helped me to abandon many misconceptions about American people which are still commonly held by people in other countries. There is now no doubt in my mind that your country is the greatest in the world.

At the same time, however, I have also realized certain American weaknesses. I believe that if these weaknesses are seriously considered by American people and reflected in their approach to other nations, our world will be bettered.

As you know, despite serious efforts, you and your government have not been doing very well in foreign relations. Each year you give tremendous military and economic aid to foreign countries. The result, however, falls far short of your expectations. Except for considerable success in developed countries, especially western Europe,

*A Japanese student takes a
polite look at American foreign
policy.*

/ Kiyoshi Kawahito

your efforts have not met your expectation in many places, particularly in so-called "underdeveloped" countries. And, to make the matter worse, more and more problems are arising in these underdeveloped countries.

Why aren't your foreign relations harmonious? Is it because these countries oppose outside influences? Is it because they are agitated by "communists"? Or is it because they are jealous of the high standard of living in the United States? I would not deny these arguments wholly. I feel, however, that these are rather minor reasons.

The major reason to which I want to call your attention is your insufficient understanding of the people in these countries. In other words, you have been failing because you fail to comprehend the real situation in which other people live and think, and in adjusting the gap between your perception and reality. And deplorable as it is, this misunderstanding is being committed without any relevance to your conscience and sincerity.

By saying that you fail in understanding other people, I do not intend to say that you are inferior in understanding others. *To the contrary, probably you are one of the most understanding people.* The problem involved here, however, is that you are in a position to influence other countries greatly whether you like it or not, and therefore you must have the responsibility to understand and lead them correctly. Think of the countries whose government can be manipulated into any direction by changing your aid program. Think of the countries whose economy is heavily dependent upon trade with your country. No other single nation can influence the fate of foreign countries and the world to such a great extent as you can.

Since "lack of understanding" is too stereotyped and too general as an explanation, I will pinpoint specific areas where I think misunderstanding generates. Some parts of this letter may appear bitter and ironical to you, but the criticism is **not** for criticism's sake.

WHAT IS COMMUNISM?

The word "communism" appears so often in our daily life. We hear and use the word in school, church, and elsewhere. Under such a flood of the word "communism," and because of the significant matters it is related to, it would be crucial that we have an agreed interpretation as to meaning of this word. In this connection, have you ever noticed that there is an apparent gap between American people and people in other countries in the interpretation and usage of the word "communism"? The existence of the gap is a fact, and yet most of your people seem to have paid little attention to it.

In this country you commonly use the word "communism" as an antonym of "democracy." Among laymen "communism" means "evil." However, in other countries, most people use "communism" strictly as an antonym of "capitalism." They contrast "communism" and "capitalism," but not "communism" and "democracy."

You would be surprised if you realized what a barrier this gap presents against your communication with people in other countries. In the first place, unnecessary hostility may be created or increased in the communist regime. Secondly, friends in other countries may hesitate to discuss any controversial issue with you because a discussion without agreement on critical words does more harm than good. In the third place, in many underdeveloped countries where people have practically never enjoyed democracy, contrasting "democracy" with "communism" does not make any sense.

Interpreted in other countries, communism is a type of socio-economic system in which means of production and distribution are possessed by the people or "state"; and capitalism is a type of socio-economic system in which means of production and distribution are possessed privately. On the other hand, the word "democracy" describes the system in which the people are governed by the people for the sake of the people. The point is that the words "communism" and "capitalism" are both purely socio-economic terms, while "democracy" describes how the system operates. In other words, by definition, both communism and capitalism can be democratic or nondemocratic. History has shown many examples of democratic capitalism and democratic communism as well as non-democratic ones.

Just as communists are indoctrinated to believe that capitalism is "imperialism," you have been indoctrinated to believe the absurd syllogism: capitalism is the antonym of communism; communism is not democratic; and therefore capitalism is democratic. It is similar to saying: man is the antonym of woman; woman is not great; and therefore man is great. This is the logical ground by which you have blindly assisted many incredibly terrible governments which happened to be capitalist. This is the logical ground by which you have helped to crash many internal movements

for reform. As long as this erroneous syllogism prevails, you will be helping to set up terrible dictators, feeding them, and sending troops at their invitation, ridiculously convinced that you are fighting so save democracy and freedom.

Let me show an aspect of the complex problem. For backward nations to develop, capital accumulation is of crucial importance. Economic theory tells us that under private-economy system capital accumulation occurs as a result of inequality of wealth—(the rich, having more than they spend, invest). As long as the wealth is accumulated through industry and frugality, and as long as the saving is invested efficiently, there is enough justification for backward nations to develop within a "free" economic system. In many instances, however, this model does not work. Wealth is ill-gotten and ill-spent. Wealth is made by a certain class who take advantage of the backward economy, and is spent luxuriously. Politics are set up so as to protect the status of this class. Under such conditions the idea of socialism and communism may naturally emerge without foreign aggression, hoping that their assimilation will assure capital accumulation and investment through collectivism. What should you do with such countries? Should you protect the "freedom" and "democracy" of the special class?

Part of the responsibility for this whole problem in this country must be borne by the intellectuals, especially college professors who know the logical sequence clearly but have dared not speak openly. They know how these controversial terms should be used, and they have been aware of the inconvenience involved in communication with people in other countries. And yet they have avoided their own involvement in this problem, and hesitated to present the whole issue courageously.

Fortunately, however, hopeful signs are gradually appearing. Here and there, movements to obtain academic freedom are steadily advancing. Furthermore, the government has begun to take initiatives to sponsor debates on controversial world issues. This trend may not keep untouched the point I have presented here. I hope that the intellectual revolution in this sense will bear fruit before long.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

Several decades ago there was a group of young writers in Japan who wrote humanitarian stories. Despite their intelligence and conscience, however, their work has been condemned by critics for lack of deep insight into the real life of people.

Why did this defect happen when they were so conscientious and intelligent? Here is the reason: most of them belonged to the wealthy aristocratic class and were reared without much contact with the common people, and, as a result, they developed a unique perception unconsciously. They were educated in exclusive schools. At home they were able to enjoy luxurious food and clothing, not to

shouting about freedom

mention frequent extravagant recreations. And yet this was a time when the majority of people were living just above subsistence.

Exactly the same lament may be cried for American people today in their relations with people in underdeveloped countries. The majority of Americans seem to be conscientious and well-educated. However, because they are living in such a high standard and in such a different culture, they have developed a unique perception, and as a result, they frequently fail to understand others who are in different settings. Deplorable as it is, you appear to be using your own measure when you make judgment on problems involving these people. You seem to be laboring under the illusion that people in other countries are living more or less in the same setting as you.

Today you enjoy the highest economic life in the world; you are enjoying a standard of living at least ten or fifteen times as high as many of underdeveloped countries. As a result, no matter how serious and conscientious you may be, it is very hard for you to understand what poverty really means.

The per capita income in these countries is less than 100 or 150 dollars a year in many cases. If you were living in such a setting as an average citizen, how would you fair? You would wear inexpensive clothing until it becomes rags. You would eat simple foods which do not have enough nutrition. You would live in a barracks which is quite different from a modern house; several people must sleep together in a single room which is stuffy, heatless, often lightless, waterless, and rain-leaking. You would not be able to think of anything more than just surviving.

In many of these countries unemployment is widespread; it is sometimes as high as twenty-five percent of the total labor force. In order to survive, people must get any kind of job, and hold it under any bad working condition. They are subject to exploitation because demand and supply in the labor market are never balanced ideally. Necessary measures to relieve such conditions are seldom initiated, because the privileged do not want to lose their foothold. And yet you are shouting, "Listen, friend. If you go to communism, you will lose freedom of occupation." How effective and persuasive!

The majority of the people cannot afford to be educated. If you were born in an average family, it would be very difficult to get a higher education. There is not such convenient device as working part-time and going to school. You may

not be able to obtain higher education even if you have ability. On the other hand, children of the tiny privileged class may enjoy higher education even when they are not deserving. Frustrated youngsters are roaming along the countryside, increasing the number of crimes. And yet you are shouting, "Listen, friend. If you go to communism, you will lose freedom of education."

Frequently these people are cursed with various diseases. People do not have much extra saving for emergency cases. Thus, partly because of the lack of adequate medical facilities and partly because of the financial capacity of the family, the average life expectancy in these countries is extremely low. If one of the important members of a family, say, their father, dies, what would happen to the rest of the family? It is not rare that little boys are forced to go to work, or daughters are sent to brothel house. And yet you are shouting, "Listen, friend. If you go to communism, you will lose the dignity of the individual."

Politics are often corrupt and fraudulent. Politicians seek personal benefit and do little for the majority of the people. In many cases, people do not have a free election, and even if they do, it is a mere formality; they are allowed to choose only one evil. Often there is no freedom of speech, of the press, or to criticize the ruling people. People are helpless and confused. And yet you are shouting, "Listen, friend. If you go to communism, you will lose your freedom and democracy."

I wish that all of your people including the president could try a similar life in simulated conditions for a few months to improve their sensitivity. This may help you to develop a more realistic ability to determine what approach you should take toward these countries in the short run and in the long run.

AMERICAN WAY OF THINKING

Sometime ago I received a letter from a friend of mine who is studying law in Japan. He said that in Japanese law schools much time is devoted to theoretical discussion and that since such method does not have much practical value, he envys the American pragmatic way wherein the case study is fully adopted. He emphasized that every way of handling problems seems to be contrasted in the same way. In my answer to his letter I said that I generally agreed to his opinion, but added that there is a conspicuous shortcoming in the American way also.

My answer quoted here summarizes the point I would like to bring to your attention. Indeed, under the unique pragmatism your country has made remarkable progress in most areas of human activity. The idea of doing something useful without delving into ideological argument has contributed greatly to making the United States an unshakable power in the world. However, when I reflect upon your difficulty in communication with people in other countries, it seems that there is a fundamental defect.

Cuba, Hitler and the Press

It is often true that theoretical argument is impractical and a waste of time. For instance, in war time it would be more urgent to learn how to handle a gun than to ponder on the cause of the war. But from the long-range viewpoint it seems equally important to develop the habit of basic analytical thinking in order to deal with a complex problem, especially when the problem involves foreign people who are living in a different environment.

Let me show you the point by examples. For instance, you use the word "freedom" often in your life, but how deeply are you thinking of this word?

It is said that you have freedom provided that you do not disturb social order. Instantly a question should rise: what is a social order? If you contemplate it, you may come to a conclusion that social order is after all the prevailing institution supported by laws. Then the next question may be: what are the laws and where did they originate? You may thus get into the problem of constitution, and then wonder what a constitution is and where it comes from. This way of thinking, I am sure, will help you to understand, for instance, why bloody revolutions are going on in some parts of the world.

Another example is the concept of "self-defense." Self-defense broadly means the right to use a certain power to retaliate when when there is aggression from outsiders and when this action is urgently necessary. But exactly under what situation may you use your right of self-defense? Is your first attack self-defense when your enemy is mobilizing its force near your border and therefore there is a great danger? Who decides whether an action is based on self-defense or aggression? Suppose a part of your potential enemy attacks one of your cities without a central order, to what extent may you retaliate? To what extent may you assist a party in a civil war in foreign countries under the name of self-defense?

When the general tendency is not to think carefully in such matters, ridiculous phenomena sometimes take place. A foreign student whom I know once gave trouble to an American family. The family reported to the FBI saying that he was a communist. An FBI man came to see me to obtain information about him. He asked the FBI man what he meant by "communist" or "communism." Most surprising was his answer: "Ah . . ., you know, ah . . ., see, you know . . ." Another example which struck me was a great political leader loudly speaking about protection of freedom and his devotion to freedom as a major part of his election

campaign, and at the same time advocating the requirement of prayer in public schools. Surprising as it is, not only he himself but also many of the voters do not seem to be aware of the apparent contradiction. Examples of this type are numerous.

You may have encountered the following type of incident; one of your friends quarrels with a person who belongs to some other group and whom you do not know well. Your friend comes to you and tells you his interpretation of what has happened. Partly because you generally trust him and partly because you have ways of thinking developed in the same group, you think that he is right, and eventually take measures according to this conviction. Some time later you find that your judgment was wrong; your friend was telling you a one-sided story, or both he and you did not realize the objective situation well. You regret what you have already committed, but it is too late.

The same problem seems to be present on a larger scale in your foreign relations. You may accept certain information supplied within your country without asking what information other sides are providing on the subject. Based on this one-sided information, and with your cultural background having been developed in this country, you may come to be convinced that your judgment is true and correct. This problem is especially intensified when you believe yourself to be more culturally advanced than others, and therefore think it unnecessary to take time to examine the poor judgment of others.

A simple example to illustrate the point may be one relating to George Washington. If you put yourself in the British position, you might regard him as a traitor. Another example deals with the Pacific War between Japan and the United States. It is commonly held here that the United States had always been peace-loving, but that since Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, she had to be involved in the war against her will. This is an entire neglect of the world situation at that time; a Japanese interpretation might be that the United States virtually forced Japan to act in that way.

You bomb North Viet Nam because the Viet Cong is apparently supported by it. In the same way, at the time of the invasion of Cuba, were you ready to accept a Cuban bombing of your country since you assisted the invasion? You send troops to the Dominican Republic and say that you will stay there until the government you like is formed. In the same way, suppose you have a political crisis in this country and, say, Canada or Mexico sends troops here saying that they will stay until the government they like is formed, would you accept it? I am not questioning whether your judgment and action is right or wrong, but calling for your attention to the fact that things can be viewed in many ways. I am asking you to develop a habit of looking at problems from others' position also.

In order to develop such a habit, availability of objective information is crucially important. In this connection I want you to take a close look at the way the press reports international affairs.

An example may show the point quickly. Let's recall the time of the Cuban invasion. Before the invasion, the informational source for the press was mostly Cuban refugees who naturally did not speak well of the government which expelled them. The information came from a particular class of Cubans, and there had already been a good lesson learned some time before when German refugees described Hitler as unpopular and due to collapse shortly. But such one-sided information was adopted because it was more comfortable for American people to think that Castro was unpopular. Reading newspapers in this country, we were led to believe that inside Cuba the dissatisfaction with Castro was so high and widespread that his collapse was merely a matter of time.

Let us recall what happened when the invaders landed on the Cuban beach. In Cuba, people, including women, were given rifles and machine guns, and had a free chance to turn their weapons against Castro by joining the invader. However, no person joined the invading army, but instead smashed it with wrathful anger.

Such misreportings are observed concerning many international problems. To make the matter worse, your people are not accustomed to reading foreign papers. As a result, you become more and more oriented to a one-sided approach, and when a certain mistaken view becomes dominant, it becomes all the more difficult for anyone to dare to disclose an opposing view publicly. Thus the trouble becomes worse and worse. Under such circumstances it is very difficult for you to communicate with people in other countries.

Every one wants to be optimistic; but everything does not go the way he wants. A good leader has the open-mindedness and the flexibility to listen to others, and yet maintains the strength not to be thrown into confusion. A nation which knows the unfavorable facts and is ready to face the challenge is much safer than a nation which is blind and deaf.

RACIAL PROBLEMS

A student from Africa who was attending an international student seminar said: "I went to a church, but they did not let me in because I am Negro. And the Americans are sending missionaries to my country. Isn't that ridiculous? Can I trust such people?" An Asian student who was attending a college in a southern state said: "I will be patient for a while. But when I go back to my country and get that promised position with the government, I will kick out all the Americans there."

The racial problem in the United States has not only domestic but international implications. As is shown above, many foreigners in this country are being mistreated because of their race, though, importantly, many of them are going to be leaders of their countries when they go home. People in other countries are watching the development of the American racial dispute. They have been watching the development of unfair immigration laws. They take these observations into account in judging Americans as a whole.

Fortunately, I myself have never experienced any extremely bitter racial treatment. But when I hear and read that Negroes in the south are deprived of their civil rights, or that murderers of Negroes are treated as heroes and declared to be innocent, I cannot help wondering whether this is a nation in the twentieth century. My trust in Americans cannot help but be shaken. If my friends in Japan say, "The American advocates freedom and democracy for his own benefit, but does not care about the rights of other people," what explanation shall I give them?

It is unfortunate and ironical that such racial problems exist in this country. Although people in other countries exploit this issue in criticizing your country, they might be experiencing a much worse situation if they had different races in their countries. But the facts are facts. You cannot face faults and criticisms by saying that the problem would be more serious if it should happen in other countries. The only way left for you is to speed up the necessary reforms and mind your conscience. I am sure that before long you will complete the work which you have recently taken up.

BEFORE CLOSING THIS LETTER

There are several areas which are of minor importance but deserve mention. Regrettably, however, space is almost exhausted and I cannot continue now. I will write again some other time to discuss these areas.

A proverb says that it is easier to criticize than to be correct. Needless to say, we non-Americans have countless defects on our side which must be corrected in order to promote mutual understanding. As I stated at the beginning, this letter should not be interpreted to point out that you are inferior in understanding others. It is rather to your position in the world and your capability to improve the world that I appeal.



GREEK BOY
AND MOTHER

*He unnerved her with yellow;
Forsythia blossom in his hand
like all the ghosts of light
come blooming and his face
was a buttercup offering
of what at three he had—
some memories of love—which*

*She gladly took, as yellow
came pouring down—his
quadrisected gift was shy
with words that crowded the giving
and then never got said.*

—MYRA SKLAREW







